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HISTORY OF BENGAL

IN THREE VOLUMES

VOLUME II

MUSLIM PERIOD

THE HISTORY OF BENGAL

VOLUME II

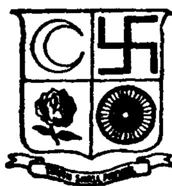
MUSLIM PERIOD

1200—1757

EDITED BY

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FOREWORD

BY

THE PUBLICATION COMMITTEE

On behalf of the University of Dacca and of the History of Bengal Publication Committee, it is my privilege to offer my most sincere thanks to Sir Jadunath Sarkar through whose untiring efforts this volume is seeing the light of the day. But for the admirable promptness and skill with which he modified our old scheme to suit the altered conditions, the publication of this volume would have been indefinitely delayed. This achievement of Sir Jadunath is all the more creditable since he worked under conditions in which any one who did not possess his indomitable courage would have broken down. Sir Jadunath suffered bereavement after bereavement while he was engaged in the preparation of this volume.

It is a great pity that before this volume could be completed, two of the promoters of the scheme were taken away from us by the cruel hand of death. Shifāul-Mulk Hakim Habibur Rahman Khan who was the embodiment of all that is best in Muslim culture, died suddenly in the midst of his labours. He was engaged at the time of his death in collecting useful material for the social and cultural history of mediaeval Bengal intended for this volume. Equally sudden was the death of our indefatigable Secretary, Dr. S. N. Bhattacharyya of the Department of History, University of Dacca, who had been actively associated with the scheme from the very beginning.

I take this opportunity of thanking sincerely all the learned scholars without whose help this volume could not have been published.

M. Hasan
Vice-Chancellor,
University of Dacca.

Dacca, 8th May, 1948.

EDITOR'S PREFACE

The first volume of this History, containing the Hindu period, was published in May 1943. The second and third volumes, which were to cover the early Muslim and the Mughal periods respectively, were planned at the same time as the first in 1936, and should in normal circumstances have followed it in two to four years. But the times were not normal, and a number of unforeseen difficulties have compelled the editor not only to delay their publication but also to alter their plan.

My first and most serious difficulty sprang from the insufficiently known fact that while the Hindu period of Bengal history, in almost every part of it has been worked over by a large number of modern scholars producing fruits of a high standard,—the Muslim period, except for a few reigns still remains unexplored ground, and we are still encompassed by almost the same mist of tradition and the deceptive light of pious frauds, which baffled Captain Charles Stewart when he attempted the first History of Bengal in English 130 years ago. Even the chronology of many of the early Muslim rulers of Bengal is still unsettled, as their coins are so few and so badly executed that their dates cannot be read with certainty. This want of modern research has been most acutely felt in respect of the social, economic and cultural history of mediaeval Bengal, the only exception being the studies in Vaishnavism, which, however, relate to the Mughal period. The students of our province's economic history have concentrated their attention on the British period and the late 17th century British trade in Bengal, while in respect of the rest of the country's history during the Muslim period, the surface has been hardly scratched.

Thus a history of Bengal under Muslim rule is bound to be a production of very uneven parts, being up to modern standards of scholarship and rich in accurate details in certain topics or reigns only, and totally dark or covered with the haze of loose tradition in all others.

It was originally intended to spread the political and cultural history evenly through these two volumes, one ending with the Mughal conquest (1575) and the other with the downfall of Muslim rule (1757). But if this plan had been adhered to, the publication of each of these volumes would have been put off till a new generation of research students had arisen and lit up the dark places of

our cultural and social history during the middle ages. Therefore, the first change that was forced upon me was to put all the political narrative of the projected two volumes in one and print it first, as the necessary contributors were available and they could be asked to supply their chapters in two years. The social and cultural history of the entire Muslim age was assigned to the final volume, which we could not hope to compile in the near future.

The next hitch occurred after the chapters of this "political history" volume had been allotted to different scholars and they had been given two years' time to submit their work. Some of them, after wavering, declined the task, many others were found to be habitually incapable of writing their promised chapters within the time limit, or indeed ever at all. So, at last the painful truth dawned upon the mind of the Editor that he must personally shoulder the burden of writing the major portion of even the political history of Bengal during five and a half centuries, if this volume was to be completed in his lifetime. That, as will be remembered, was also the sad experience of Dr. R. C. Majumdar, the Editor of the first volume. As will be seen, I have had to write more than 200 pages in this volume of a little over 500 pages, besides revising and sometimes recasting the work of many of the other contributors.

After these preliminary troubles had been got over as best we could, we had hopes of the manuscripts for the different chapters being sent in to the Editor by the end of 1941 ; but just at that time came the war with Japan and the air raids on Bengal and Assam. The libraries of our Universities and learned Societies were closed and their most valuable books and journals were sent into storage in safer places far inland. Thus, our Bengali contributors could not consult learned works or verify references. This interruption lasted during the pendency of the war.

When the world war ended, our troubles instead of easing, became rather intensified. Political disorder, sectarian fights, and even common types of crime, raised their ugly heads all over the province on a scale unheard of before. The evil was aggravated by almost universal labour trouble, which interrupted postal and railway communications, and during several months the working of printing presses. Thus, though the first chapter of this volume was put in type as early as October 1944, its actual printing made very slow progress for over two years, for no fault of the printers. However, by intense activity during 1947, the book was completed and the printing nearly finished by the end of that year.

These troubles and the necessity of printing off the composed matter promptly during 1947, explain why the proofs could not be

sent to our distant contributors but had to be read in Calcutta. If any errors have crept in, the writers should not be held responsible for them.

This long delay has robbed one of our valued contributors, Dr. Sudhindra Nath Bhattacharya, Ph.D., of the pleasure of seeing his work in print; and it is now the Editor's painful duty to give him posthumous thanks for his excellent chapters (82 pages of print, Chapters 13-16) relating to a period that he had made peculiarly his own. His intensive study of the history of Bengal's north-eastern frontier during the reign of Jahangir, his minute attention to topography, his gift of identifying even petty villages by ransacking the lists of villages in different districts compiled by Government for the use of post offices, and his acumen in correcting errors of date in accepted works, all lend a special value to the work of Dr. Sudhindra Nath Bhattacharya. He had written his contribution at much fuller length and requested the Editor to compress it to a size more in keeping with the general plan of this volume. The Editor has reduced it to half its original length, but nowhere has any of the author's opinions been altered.

The other contributors are happily still in our midst and to them I render my thanks for their valued assistance:

Dr. Kalika Ranjan Qanungo (91 pages, Chapters 1-3),
Professor Nirod Bhusan Roy (38 pages, Chapters 4 and 8),
Dr. A. B. M. Habibullah (36 pages, Chapters 6 and 7),
Dr. Jagadish Narayan Sarkar (7 pages, Chapter 18),
Dr. Surendra Nath Sen (20 pages, Chapter 19) and
Dr. Kali Kinkar Datta (33 pages, Chapters 22 and 23).

No attempt has been made to remove the minor differences of opinion or date between one contributor and another in their respective sections; and each of them must be judged in the light of the authority relied upon by him.

For the Editor's own portion of this volume (200 pages, Chapters 5, 9-12, 17, 20, 21, 24-26, besides some sections of Chapters 14 and 18), his only apology is the nature of the raw material on which he had to work. He had to clear the jungle and break virgin soil in respect of certain periods in his share, such as the viceroyalties of Prince Muhammad Shujā', Shāista Khan, and Murshid Quli Khan. In these, my predecessors, the *Riyāz-us-salātin* and its English version, Stewart's *History of Bengal,* had merely left to us an uncharted wilderness, and I had to construct their true story by piecing together a large number of stray hints in Persian manuscripts and letters and European traders' reports. A comparison of these chapters with the corresponding pages in Stewart will show how our knowledge of the

history of Bengal has advanced beyond recognition in the century and a quarter that have followed the days of Stewart. No period of the history of mediaeval Bengal is now known even in half such fulness and accuracy of detail, supported by absolutely contemporary records, as the reign of Jahangir (1608-1627). But that was due entirely to my discovery of the *Bahāristān-i-Ghaibi* (Mirzā Nathan's personal recollections) in the Bibliotheque Nationale of Paris (in 1919) and the Ahom *buranjis* brought to light at Sir Edward Gait's initiative. These priceless materials have been exhaustively utilised through the long and devoted study of Professor Sudhindra Nath Bhattacharya.

In conclusion, I must thank the General Printers & Publishers Ltd., for their patient care in printing what was often very badly typed and worse corrected manuscripts and keeping the composed matter standing for long periods of civil disturbance. Dr. Ramesh Chandra Majumdar, Ph.D., smoothed the launching of the scheme by making the preliminary arrangements and giving constant attention to the work to be done by the Dacca Committee, during his five years' Vice-Chancellorship of that University, till his retirement in 1942. The present Vice-Chancellor of the Dacca University, Dr. Mahmood Hasan, D. Phil, has made my work much easier by taking an unfailing interest in the book and solving every difficulty as it arose, so as to expedite its publication.

For the very detailed and helpful index, with its cross references and explanatory notes, we are indebted to the trained skill of Professor Nirod Bhusan Roy M.A. Sriyut Asoka K. Majumdar, M.A., has been very helpful to me in expediting the printing.

The cost of book production is now four times what it was in 1938 when the publication of this History was planned, and there is an acute shortage of skilled assistants. For this reason and also to avoid further delay in the publication of this volume, no map (except one), picture or coin plate could be included in it. The Editor's regret for this cruel necessity is no less keen than that of his readers, especially as all will miss the very necessary illustrations of the changes in the river-courses and land-routes during the six centuries covered by this volume. We can only hope that with better times this defect will be made good in Volume III.

February, 1948.

JADUNATH SARKAR

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Delhi



CHAPTER I

THE MUSLIM CONQUEST OF BENGAL

I. The Khilji Invasion

The Muslim conquest of Bengal in the beginning of the thirteenth century was but a phase of the Turanian *Volkerwanderung*, which had begun with the migration of the Kara-Khitai horde from the borders of Mongolia in a south-westerly direction and the resultant dislodgment of the nomadic tribes of the Trans-Oxus region in the second half of the twelfth century A.D. It was about this time that a fresh wave of the camel-rearing Turkoman tribes named the Ghuzz and the Khiljis or Khalajis, whose original habitat is not definitely known, burst upon the Saljuq Empire, overran Khorāsān, Seistān and Afghānistān, and forced themselves as " squatters " on the settled population of the same ethnic origins, who had migrated into these tracts as early as the tenth century A.D. This inflow of warlike peoples revived the dying energies of Islam which had been losing force in India ever since the death of Sultan Mahmud Ghaznavi, so that after the lapse of a century and a half Islam started afresh in its career of aggressive imperialism. The tide of migration of the nomads swelled by the more adventurous elements in the countries through which they moved, took its destined course to the east of the Indus, and permanently affected the political destiny of India by giving the character of colonisation to the Muslim conquest of Northern India in the thirteenth century. Its first rush did not stop till Muhammad Bakhtyār Khilji carried the victorious banner of Islam further eastward into South Bihar, and soon after planted it triumphantly on the banks of the Bhāgirathi and the Karatoyā.

Muhammad Bakhtyār was one of the crowd of Khilji adventurers who separated themselves from their tribe settled in Garamsir, now known as Dasht-i-Margo, situated on the eastern border of Seistān. He had no pretensions to a high lineage or rich heritage in his native land, having been perhaps hardly better conditioned in life than his illustrious lieutenant 'Iwāz Khilji, who with his wife and his ass left Garamsir about this time in search of a kingdom in Hindustan. Muhammad Bakhtyār came to Ghazni perhaps later than 1195 A.D. seeking employment as a soldier in the

army of Shihābuddin Ghori, and on being rejected there he proceeded to the court of Malik Qutbuddin Aibak at Delhi. There too luck did not befriend Bakhtyār, because he was a man of short stature, long arms and an ill-favoured countenance, without the means of providing himself with a horse and a suit of armour. However, his boiling nomad blood urged him forward to a sort of "Eastward Ho" as it were to Badāyun; but even there he was not considered worth a *jagir* but only a cash salary by Malik Hizbar-ud-din, the *Sipāh-sālār* of that province. Having served under the Governor of Badāyun for a short time, Muhammad Bakhtyār repaired to Oudh about 1197 A.D. Malik Husāmuddin, Governor of Oudh, recognised the worth of Bakhtyār; but he too prudently kept the ambitious free-lance captain at a safe distance by granting him in *jagir* two *parganas* in the south-eastern corner of the modern Mirzāpur district, which had not perhaps been previously visited by any Muslim army. However, a frontier command with freedom of exertion was just the thing that suited the military genius of Bakhtyār and the predatory instincts of his nomad followers.

About eleven miles due east of Chunār and some thirty miles from Mirzāpur, the village of Bhuili, overhung by a fort in ruins at the northern foot of the Vindhya range, now marks the cradle of Muhammad Bakhtyār's power and ambition. It is situated within the *pargana* of that name which along with the *pargana* of Bhāgwat, later on known as Hanwā, constituted the *jagir*[1] of Muhammad Bakhtyār. After having supplanted the petty Gahadvār chiefs of this tract, he began ravaging the open country to the east of the Karmanāsā and in the direction of Muner and Bihār. His fame as a doughty Lord Marcher and successful general soon attracted to his standard large bodies of Khiljis and Turks wandering about in Hindustan in search of bread and a new home. As the eastward expansion of the Muslim power through North Bihar was at this time barred by the powerful Hindu kingdom of Mithilā under the Karṇāṭaka dynasty, the momentum of the Muslim offensive under the leadership of Muhammad Bakhtyār acquired a greater driving force in South Bihar. Further, Malik Qutbuddin Aibak is said to have hailed the rising star of Islam in the east by sending him a

[1] Bhāgwat and Bhuili as *jagirs* of Muhammad Bakhtyār have been correctly identified by Raverty, whom Blochmann also corroborates. Bhuili is the north-eastern *pargana* of Chunār *tahsil*. The village of Bhuili lies in latitude 26° 8′ N. and longitude 83° 3′ E. The *pargana* of Bhuili touches the *pargana* of Bhāgwat on the west, the latter being about 20 miles from north to south with an average breadth of 7 miles. The fort of Patita, which was perhaps the head-quarters of Bhāgwat *pargana*, lies about 8 miles south-east of Chunār. For details see the *Gazetteer of the Mirzapur District*, 1911.

khilat "with words of praise and encouragement." Muhammad Bakhtyār was not the knight-errant of Islam to seek out and fight only his most formidable Hindu adversaries of whom there were several in the neighbourhood. Hariśchandra, son of Jayachandra of Kanauj, maintained his independence till at least 1200 A.D.; a feudatory of that house, Rāṇaka Vijayakarṇa, erected a votive stone-pillar at Belkhārā within 8 *kos* of Chunār, in 1197 A.D.; the Mahānāyakas of the famous fort of Rohtās maintained their independence and one of their sub-vassals, Mahāmaṇḍalika Udayarāja[1] of Navanerā-pattana granted some villages to a Brahman family in 1197 in the neighbourhood of Dehri-on-Son. Muslim chronicles ignore the stone and copper-proved existence of these Hindu powers which too seemed to have seen no reason to be perturbed by the activities of the Muslims at their doors.

Muhammad Bakhtyār had no siege-train for capturing strong Hindu forts; nor was it his policy to provoke any wide-spread commotion in the country. His object was to secure a maximum of booty at a minimum of risk and bloodshed. So he confined himself to scouring the open country undefended by the field army of any organised State. After having plundered the Hindu territory "for a year or two," he made a sudden dash for "the fortress of Bihar" (*hisār-i-Bihār*), captured it by forcing its postern-gate and put to the sword all its inhabitants, most of whom were shaven-headed monks possessing much wealth and more books. As the Muslims learnt afterwards that it was a *vihāra* or *madrāsa,* they gave the whole country the name of Bihar, which had once been no doubt a land of Buddhist monasteries also. The fortified monastery which Bakhtyār captured probably in 1199 A.D. was known as Audand-Bihār or Odaṇḍapura-vihāra.

According to all Muslim historians, Muhammad Bakhtyār led his army a second time in the direction of Bihar in the year following the sack of the fortified monastery of that name. This year, *i.e.* 1200 A.D., he was busy consolidating his hold over that province, as the author of *Riyāz-us-sālātin* says, "by establishing *thānas* or military outposts and by introducing administrative arrangements,"—which we know was the invariable method of stabilizing a conquest. It is not definitely known what other portions of South Bihar were conquered by the Muslims this year There is a very faithful echo of the then state of things in Bihar in the Buddhist tradition which tells us that the famous saint and scholar, Śākya Śrībhadra of Kashmir visited Magadha in the year 1200 A.D. The traveller found Odantapurī-vihāra and the Vikrama-

[1] *EI.* XXII. 222.

śilā monastery in ruins, and terrified by the excesses of the Turks in Magadha he fled for safety to Jagaddala-vihāra in the Bogrā (?) district of North Bengal.[1] Bengal under its pious and aged ruler Lakshmaṇasena was slumbering in apathy till a year after Bakhtyār stole a march upon her and rudely knocked at the palace-gate of Nudiā.

During the dry season of the year 1201 A.D. a troop of foreign cavalry was riding with loose reins towards the city of Nudia. When the sun was at the meridian these men, only nineteen in number, slackened the momentum of their ride before the city-gate, and assumed the placid demeanour of merchants. The strangers slowly proceeded unchallenged through the city to the palace of King Lakshmaṇasena where all of a sudden they drew their swords, and as the Muslim historian puts it, began the holy war. All was now tumult and panic within the palace as well as in the city outside. When the old monarch, just seated at his meal, learnt that the assailants had already dashed into his palace and the inner apartments, he hurriedly took to flight and got into a boat which sailed down the river for some refuge in East Bengal.[2] The victory of Bakhtyār was completed "when his whole army arrived and the entire city was brought under control."

Such is the story of Malik Muhammad Bakhtyār's capture of the royal palace of Mahārājā Lakshmaṇasena that decided for ever the fate of the Hindu sovereignty of Bengal. A variant of the same story is given by Isami, the author of the *Futuh-us-sālātin,* a metrical history of India, written less than a century after the *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri,* who tells us that Muhammad Bakhtyār reached Nadia in the disguise of the leader of a merchant-caravan from Seistan, and induced Rāi Lakhmaniyā to come out of the palace to inspect the thorough-bred Tartar horses and excellent brocade of China, besides vast stores of the rare products of every clime,

[1] S. C. Das, *Antiquity of Chittagong* (*JASB.* 1898, p. 25).

[2] The region to which Rāi Lakhmaniya fled from Nadia is named in the *T.N.* as *Bang wa S-k-n-āt. Bang* means East Bengal and the second place-name is a copyist's error for Sil-hāt *i.e.,* Sylhet. The invariable practice of Persian writers is to designate a district by joining together *two* well-known places in it, which might be even 50 miles apart; *e.g.,* Sultanpur-Nandurbar, Vani-Dindori, Trimbak-Nasik, Dholpur-Bari, Kora-Jahanabad, Kara-Manikpur. The grandfather and father-in-law of the saint Chaitanya in the 15th century had migrated from Dacca and Sylhet to Nadia. We can easily imagine that the opposite current, from Nadia to Sylhet, had flowed two centuries earlier.

which he had brought for sale. "When the Rāi reached the *Kārwān*" (halting-place of caravans), the narrative continues,

"Muhammad offered him a rich *peshkash* of precious things, and at the same time made a signal to a party of his soldiers to fall upon the Hindus. The Turks charged, and defeat befell the Hindu soldiers, a party of whom, however, stood their ground firmly around the Rai and created alarm among the Turks........At last when the brave warriors of the Khilji breed made a hurricane-like onslaught and killed some Hindu *sawārs*, the Rai fell a prisoner to Bakhtyār."

II. The Sack of Navadvip Historically Reconstructed

There is no evidence that Navadvip was ever the permanent capital of the Sena kings. It was merely a holy place on the bank of the Ganges, where pious people took up their residence out of regard for its sanctity. With the coming of the Sena king and his officers, a city grew up from the thronging of the traders and servants who ministered to the needs of a rich and populous Court. The city, however, consisted almost entirely of thatched bamboo houses,—the characteristic feature of Bengal architecture, whence the name of *Bangālā* given even to the stone edifices in Delhi Fort built in this style of arched bamboo roofs. Every rich or pious person wished to live as close to the holy river as possible, and therefore these houses formed a long narrow sprawling line for some six miles along the bank of the Ganges. No fort, no protective wall of brick, is mentioned by any historian as guarding Navadvip then or ever afterwards, and such a defensive work seems unlikely to have existed in 1200 A.D. Most probably a bamboo palisade,—like the *sāl* wood palisade of ancient Pāṭaliputra noticed by Megasthenes—encircled the main portion of the city, with an octroi post at the gate.[1]

Bengal's strategic point of defence against any land attack from the western side was the narrow pass of Teliāgarhi near Rājmahal. North of this point it was very easy for armies to march from Bengal towards Tirhut and Oudh along the north bank of the Ganges, crossing the Kosi and the Gandak at some convenient ford. Hence the name of the 'Gateway of Bengal' (Dārbangā) given to the Tirhut district. But south of Teliāgarhi lay the enormous land of hill and jungle, popularly called *Jhārkhand* (or Forest Country), through which no large army could pass on account of its lack of

[1] The palace, as we know, stood on the very bank of the Ganges, while the city's western gate must have been far inland in order to intercept the merchandise that came from the south and the west by the land route, so that the custom duty could be collected here.

roads, food supplies and human habitations. Only small select bodies of hardy cavalry mounted on superb horses could make a dash across this *terra incognita,* if they were guided by local zamindars. Such invaders would leave the Ganges on their left flank at Teliāgarhi—or even further west at Mungir—and after traversing Jhārkhand would rejoin the same river beyond Birbhum.[1] This route has been repeatedly followed by invaders of Bengal in more recent times, such as Mir Jumla in 1659 and the Peshwa Bālāji Rāo in 1743.

It would be reasonable to suppose that the Sena Rajah had posted his defensive forces at Teliāgarhi only, and left Navadvip denuded of troops, never imagining that the Teliāgarhi defences would be turned by the forced march of Turkish horsemen through the wilderness of Jhārkhand.

The surprise of a city by foreign soldiers disguised as horse-dealers cannot be dismissed as an impossible figment of the imagination. At the end of the 17th century the Emperor Aurangzib wrote,

"From the news report of the province of Kabul it is learnt that 11,000 horses, fit to be cavalry remounts, with one groom for every two horses, have entered Kabul, it being the usual practice that after selection by the governor of Delhi the horses are sent to the Emperor........This is a very strange act of negligence on the part of Amir Khan (the *subahdār* of Kabul). It is as if 5,500 brave Turānis have entered our imperial dominions from foreign parts. Such was the number of the men who wrested the kingdom of Hind from the hands of the Afghans (in Babur's invasion). In future, whenever the droves of horses arrive the governor of Kabul should allow only one groom to every twenty horses, and that groom too should be a useless old and weak man" (*Āhkām-i-'Alamgiri,* § 49).

The actual scene of the surprise of Nadia has been hitherto misunderstood through lack of a careful and detailed study of the exact words of Minhāj-i-Sirāj, our earliest and best authority. We give a literal translation of the Persian text here :

"The second year from this, Muhammad Bakhtyār got his troops ready, started from Bihar and suddenly entered the city of Nadia, so fast that not more than 18 troopers could keep up with him, while the rest of his army were coming up behind him. When he reached the gate of the city he did not molest any one, but (proceeded) silently and modestly, so that none could imagine that it was Md. Bakhtyār. but most probably the people thought that the (new-comers) were traders who had brought high-priced horses for sale. When he reached the gate of the residence of Rāi Lakhmaniya, he drew his sword and began the slaughter of infidels. At that

[1] Md. Bakhtyār's starting point in this Bengal expedition was Bihār, which means the city of Bihār Sharif—and not Patna. His line of advance from Upper India was most probably across the Son river somewhat south of Muner, then through Bihār Sharif and the Gaya district, and eastwards and southwards through Jhārkhand to Nadiā.

time the Rāi......was seated at his meal......when cries rose up from the gate of his palace *and* the middle of the city. By the time that he learnt what the circumstances were, Md. Bakhtyār had run into his palace and *harem* and cut down a number of people; (so) the Rāi fled away by the back-door with bare feet......" (*Tabaqāt-i-Nāsiri*, text, Bib. Ind., 150-151).

Carefully interpreting the words of this original authority and bearing in mind the topography of Nadia as just described, we can thus reconstruct the story of the attack with the help of a small amount of allowable historical imagination:—

From his last night's resting place in the woods, some 20 miles north-west of Navadvip Muhammad Bakhtyār resumed his march at sunrise. It was already noon when he came to the gate of the city and by that time only 18 troopers, mounted on the best horses, were able to keep up with him, the others were coming behind in straggling groups, separated one from another by a quarter of an hour's ride. He rode through the city slowly and silently in an unostentatious style without molesting any people, so that this small party was naturally taken for a band of foreign traders, who had brought horses for sale. That they did not excite the people's curiosity is a proof that caravans of Turkish horse-dealers had visited Nadia before and no doubt spied out the secrets of the place. At this slow pace Muhammad Bakhtyār took some 25 minutes to pass from the custom-barrier of the city to the gate of the Rajah's bungalow, a distance of at least 1½ miles, and by this time a second batch of his horsemen had already entered by the city gate and a third batch was within hail of it.

The sun had already begun to decline from the meridian, and according to the immemorial Indian practice,—which even the Mughal Emperors followed,—the morning Court having been dismissed, all people had returned home to take their bath, noon-day meal, and the inevitable *siesta*, and there was a general slackness and dispersion of people throughout the city, every man going his own way. Such was the moment of the attack.

Arrived at the Rajah's palace-gate, Muhammad Bakhtyār's party drew their swords, cut down the unsuspecting and probably half-undressed guards, and pushed into the inner quarters. Immediately on hearing this clamour the *second* party of silently pacing Turkish horsemen, who had now reached some spot midway between the city-gate and the palace-gate, raised their war cry and began an attack where they were, and the third and fourth bands of stragglers spurred their jaded horses and hastened to share in the loot. Thus only can we explain the significant statement that at the time of Muhammad Bakhtyār's very *first* onset "cries rose up from the gate of the Rajah's palace *and* the middle of the city,"—*i.e.*, there were two

groups of Turks making a simultaneous attack on two parts of the city, and not a single party of 19 horsemen attacking one point only.

III. The Siege of Gaur and the Reduction of Varendra

Muhammad Bakhtyār's surprise of Nudia was not a mere fortunate stroke of random raid, but the starting point of a well-planned campaign. Bakhtyār did not send any troops in pursuit of the fugitive king nor did he leave any detachment behind to occupy the Rāḍh tract permanently. He stopped only for a few days at Nadia to collect booty by sacking the city thoroughly, and swept forward to strike at Gaur, the historic capital of Bengal. History does not record definitely how and when the city of Gaur with its ample and mighty fortifications fell to the lance of Bakhtyār. We hear of no blockade, assault or massacre but the bare mention that in the *mauza* or tract where the city of Gaur stood Bakhtyār established his seat of government. On the other hand, there is the indirect testimony of Minhāj in his subsequent chapters on the Khilji Maliks to support the view that Gaur at first occupied a secondary position for about two decades, after which the seat of government was removed from Devkot to Gaur in the reign of Sultan Ghiyasuddin 'Iwaz Khilji. In the absence of details of the conquest we can only infer that like the warriors of the steppe and the desert in every age operating in a civilized country, the army of Bakhtyār also first ravaged the open country without making an attempt on Gaur,—if it was resolutely defended as a local tradition of doubtful value would have us believe. At any rate Muhammad Bakhtyār fairly completed his conquest of the Varendra tract with the historic city of Gaur before the year 599 A.H., and with a handsome portion of the spoils of Bengal he started by way of Bihar for the presence of Malik Qutbuddin who had almost about the same time (23 March, 1203) completed the conquest of Kālinjar[1] Mahobā and Kālpi. It was on the whole a clever stroke of diplomacy on the part of Muhammad Bakhtyār to seek an amicable understanding with Malik Qutbuddin who might otherwise refuse to recognise him as the lawful ruler of Bihar and Bengal and cause him perpetual anxiety by instigating the governors of Oudh and Kālinjar to attack his possessions in Bihar and Mirzapur.

Malik Ikhtyāruddin Muhammad Bakhtyār devoted the next two years (1203-1205) to the peaceful administration of his newly

[1] *Tāj-ul-maāsir*, MS. p. 261, "*du-shumba bistum Rajab*" is an untenable reading as 20th Rajab was a Friday. I read *hashtum* for *bistum*, which gives Sunday-Monday.

founded kingdom. He followed the usual practice of Muslim conquerors by pulling down idol-temples and building mosques on their ruins, endowing *madrāsas* or colleges of Muslim learning and evincing his zeal for religion by converting the infidels. But he was not blood-thirsty, and took no delight in massacre or inflicting misery on his subjects. The problems of internal administration and the conciliation of his military chiefs were together solved by the establishment of a sort of feudal government in the country.

IV. Ikhtyāruddin Muhammad Bakhtyār's Tibet expedition

Muhammad Bakhtyār's Tibet expedition was the last episode of his meteoric career. But it still remains a riddle in history. It is not clear why the conqueror of Gaur had become more interested in exploring the secrets of the *terra incognita* between the uplands of Varendra and the Himālayas across which lay the lands of Tibet, China and Turkestan—than the rich and civilized kingdoms of the plain lying within the easy reach of his conquering arms. There was the kingdom of Kāmrup only on the other bank of the river Tistā-Karatoyā on his right flank, and to his left lay the unsubdued kingdom of Mithilā between the Kosi and the Gandak; more dangerous to his far-flung possessions in Bihar and Bengal were in his rear the Sena power of Vikrampur, and the Eastern Gaṅga Empire of Orissa. Muhammad Bakhtyār had already lost half his game by his failure to capture the person of Mahārāja Lakshmaṇa-sena. The old king reigned in peace at Vikrampur till 1206 A.D. The subjugation of the wealthy Hindu kingdoms on the plains of Eastern India should have engaged Bakhtyār's attention first before he could venture on a distant enterprise on the other slope of the Himālayas. It was perhaps his inborn spirit of adventure inflamed by the lure of the fabled gold of the northern mountains that urged him to undertake the disastrous expedition to Tibet. Or, was it the pioneer spirit of exploring and opening a short cut to Turkestan?

Muhammad Bakhtyār's Tibet expedition, however, was not a leap in the dark suddenly resolved upon and undertaken without much fore-thought or adequate preparations, diplomatic and military Tibet had not been a land of mystery to the people of Bengal, but an attractive resort of religious preachers and scholars since the days of the Pālas, and Tibetan traders perhaps as much frequented the annual fairs of North Bengal through the Darjeeling route since then as they do in our days. So it was not difficult for Muhammad Bakhtyār "to make himself acquainted with conditions of the boundaries of Tibet and Turkistan" as Minhāj-i-Sirāj says. At that time "between the country of Lakhnawati and Tibet" lay the

"hills" or rather the jungle tract which were inhabited by three non-Indian Mongoloid tribes, the Koch, the Mech, and the Tharu or Tiharu. As an essential preliminary Muhammad Bakhtyār perhaps made raids of exploration into the tribal tracts, as we are told by Minhāj-i-Sirāj that Bakhtyār, prior to his expedition, had captured a Mech chief and induced him to accept Islam at his hands. This man, later known as 'Ali the Mech, agreed to act as Bakhtyār's guide through the submontane region and he had been perhaps instrumental in winning for his master the loyalty of the tribes, which, as we learn, stood well the test of Bakhtyār's darkest hour of misfortune. With the kingdom of Kāmrup, which had no love lost with the descendants of Lakshmaṇasena—since that monarch's invasion of Kāmrup—Muhammad Bakhtyār seems to have been in friendly intercourse. The river Tistā-Karatoyā flowed unviolated between the Muslim principality of Lakhnawati and that country.

Four years after his brilliant Bengal campaign Muhammad Bakhtyār and the Turks were on the war-path again. Shortly before his Tibet expedition he sent Muhammad Sherān and his brother Ahmad Sherān of his own tribe in command of an army towards Lakhnor (Nagar in the Birbhum district), and Jājnagar (kingdom of Orissa). This was intended to keep the Hindus south of the Ganges busy, and perhaps to annex the Rāḍh region permanently. He left Ali Mardān Khilji in Sarkar Ghorāghāt to watch the eastern frontier from his headquarters at Barsul (Barsala of the *Ain*), while Husām-ud-din Khilji was entrusted with the defence of the western march in the direction of Oudh and Tirhut. Husām-ud-din with his headquarters at Ganguri (most likely *Gankarah* in Sarkar Tānda of the *Ain*), ruled the entire tract from the Rājmahal hills to the lower course of the Burhi (old) Kosi, that formed the boundary between the territory of the Lakhnawati and the kingdom of Mithilā or Tirhut. The expeditionary forces had perhaps as their rendezvous the town of Devkot, about ten miles south of modern Dinajpur. Toward the close of the winter of 1206 A.D. Muhammad Bakhtyār started from Devkot at the head of his grand army, ten thousand well-equipped horse, on his fateful expedition.

The invading army marched in a north-easternly direction till they reached the neighbourhood of Bardhan-kot, a fabled city said to have been founded by Shāh Gursh-āsp of Irān during his legendary wanderings in the East. In front of the city flowed a mighty river named Bāgmati "thrice as broad as the Ganges" (which was no other than the Old Tistā as correctly guessed by Blochmann), and without crossing this river Muhammad Bakhtyār's

army was conducted by 'Ali, the Mech, for ten days up the river Bagmati till they found themselves among the mountains. On the eleventh day from their start from Bardhan, the troops crossed the river Bagmati or Tistā over an ancient bridge of "hewn stone," also known to have been a relic of Shāh Gursh-āsp's might.[1] Now began the march through the territory of the Rajah of Kāmrup at its extreme northern point.

'Ali, the Mech, took leave of his master and Muhammad Bakhtyār, having left some troops under two officers to guard the passage, began his ascent. Then followed fifteen days' hard march up-hill and down-dale through the labyrinth of the Himālayas, and on the sixteenth day they sighted an open country populous and well-cultivated. The whole country now rose against the invaders and inflicted serious losses on the Muslim army in a pitched battle that raged from morning till sun-set. Muhammad Bakhtyār, though technically victorious, broke up camp that very night and began his disastrous retreat. For fifteen days the army of Bengal found no food for men nor even grass for horses, as the hillmen had utterly destroyed all the forage of the countryside. The Turks ate up their famished horses, and many died of hunger and exhaustion. When they reached the bridge they found to their dismay that it had been deserted by their comrades and materially damaged by the troops of the Rajah of Kāmrup. After a perilous halt for some days on the Kāmrup side of the river they desperately attempted to cross the deep and rapid stream on horse-back. Out of Bakhtyār's grand army scarcely more than one hundred survived to accompany him to Devkot, in utter destitution.

This disastrous failure of Bakhtyār deeply affected the subsequent course of the history of Bengal for half a century. The Hindu powers found a respite and a longer lease of life; severe losses in man-power arrested the expansion of the Muslim principality of Gaur; Bihar, from which Bakhtyār had drawn a large number of troops for this expedition, was ultimately lost to Bengal. Demoralisation seized the Khiljis; treachery and dissensions became rife in the land when luck deserted Bakhtyār. Shame and remorse made him avoid society, and perhaps a lurking suspicion of murder haunted his mind. A consuming fever attacked him, and when the conqueror of Bengal was hovering between life and death, Ali Mardān Khilji is said to have murdered the dying hero with a thrust of his dagger about three months after his return to Devkot in 602 A.H. (1206). By a curious coincidence in

[1] *TN.* 152.

the same year happened two other significant events of our medieval history: namely the murder of Sultan Mu'iz-uddin Ghuri on the banks of the Jhilam, and the demise of the last great Hindu king Mahārāja Lakshmaṇasena in his river-girt eastern capital at Vikrampur. During the few years that he outlived the disaster of Nudia the pious and scholarly Rajah employed his pen and purse in building for himself an enduring edifice of literary fame.

Malik Ikhtyār-ud-din Muhammad Bakhtyār was indeed the maker of the medieval history of Bengal. He made his mark in an age when "From the *nakhās* to the *Masnad*" (from the slave-market to the carpet of royalty) was a more common phenomenon in the East than one "From Log Cabin to White House" in the New World of the nineteenth century. But Muhammad Bakhtyār unlike other Indo-Muslim worthies was born a free man, and lived and died a free man, elevating himself by his own unaided efforts from the position of a poor adventurer to that of a Sultan in all but the name. His life was too short and stormy to give him time and opportunity to consolidate his conquests and prove his capacity as an administrator. No doubt, Muhammad Bakhtyār was above all a soldier excelling all his contemporaries in dash, resourcefulness and leadership. Though plebeian by birth and deformed in body, he was a born leader of men, brave to recklessness and generous to a fabulous extent. His weaknesses were those born of over-confidence and uninterrupted success.

No written chronicle throws light on the actual extent of the principality of Lakhnawati founded by him. We have no coins or inscriptions of Muhammad Bakhtyār's time to spread on a modern map, and give the reader an idea of the geography of the Khilji dominion at his death. Some pioneers[1] in the reconstruction of the history of Bengal have been rather persistent in under-estimating the extent and importance of Muhammad Bakhtyār's achievements, which were in their opinion "mere plundering raids" magnified into conquests by the later historians. They are inclined to confine the Muslim possessions in Bengal to the narrow stretches of the river Mahānandā and the Punarbhavā, though facts unchallenged by them prove with approximate certainty that the principality of Lakhnawati was at this time much larger—roughly bounded on the north by a north-easterly straight line from the modern town of Purnea *via* Devkot to the town of Rangpur; on the east and the south-east by the Tistā and the Karatoyā; on the south by the main stream of the Ganges; and on the west by the lower course

[1] Monmohan Chakravarti, *JASB.* New Series. IV. 153; Banerji, *Bangalar Itihas*, II. 1st edition, 7-9.

of the Kosi and from its mouth across the Ganges to the Rājmahal hills. And within this limit Muhammad Bakhtyār firmly held, besides *Sarkar* Lakhnauti, the major portion of the *mahals* of each of the six other *Sarkars*,[1] Tānda, Purnea, Pinjrah, Tājpur, Ghorāghāt and Barbakābād of Todarmal's rent-roll of the Subah of Bengal. As regards his possessions in Bihar, which suffered no loss during his life-time, we must hold, till contrary evidence of numismatics and archaeology comes to light, that from the foot of the Vindhya hills in the Mirzapur district along the southern bank of the Ganges right up to the Rājmahal hills his authority was predominant in the greater part of South Bihar; and in addition he perhaps also held the riverine tracts on the north bank of the Ganges from the mouth of the Gandak river to the that of the Kosi.[2] Throughout the Middle Ages the same historical relation between Bengal and Bihar continued,—the latter always serving as the stepping-stone to the sovereignty of Bengal from the time of Muhammad Bakhtyār to that of Alivardi Khan, and yet being regarded as a minor partner in the scheme of government.

The system of government that prevailed in Muhammad Bakhtyār's time,—and also long afterwards, was a sort of clannish feudalism. The major portion of the country was divided among the army officers, most of whom were Turks and Khiljis. The motley host of adventurers that followed the fortune of Muhammad Bakhtyār settled down comfortably in their new home each holding a knight's fee. Muhammad Bakhtyār created some big governorships on the frontiers, and entrusted them to powerful Lords Marcher, Ali Mardān, Husām-uddin 'Iwaz and Muhammad Shirān,—

[1] The cities of Lakhnawati and Devkot in *Sarkar Lakhnauti;* Ali Mardān's fief of Barsul (*Barsala, Sarkar Ghoraghat*) : Muhammad Sherān's fiefs of Santosh and Moseda (in Sarkar Barbakabad); "territory between Devkot and Bekanwah" fief of Minhāj's informant, Muta'mid-uddaula (*Bekanwah* of Raverty corrected as *Bangaon*, a *mahal* in Sarkar Barbakabad) ; Husām-uddin's fief with headquarters at *Ganguri* or *Gankuri* (identified with *Gankarah* in *Sarkar* Tanda); *Narānkoti* and its variants, perhaps the scribe's perversion of *diyār-i-Kosi*, though printed as *diyār-i-Koe* (*Nasiri, Text.* 156); which was Ali Mardān's fief according to Raverty, whereas Nizamuddin Ahmad gives *Barsul.* The Kosi, on this side of which Husam-uddin 'Iwaz received Ali Mardān Khilji coming from Delhi (*Nasiri, Trans.* 578n), had certainly been the boundary of Bakhtyār's territory. Later on all through the medieval period that river was regarded as the indisputable boundary between Tirhut and Bengal. For *grounds* of identification the reader is referred to Appendix B to this chapter.

[2] The traditional boundary always claimed by the Muslim rulers of Bengal, and recognised by the Delhi emperors down to Babur—was the river Gandak on the northern bank of the Ganges. Through this riverain tract of Bhagalpur and Mungir lying north of the Ganges lay the high way of communication between Bengal and Oudh down to the middle of the fourteenth century.

all Khiljis. This gave the character of a Khilji oligarchy to the Muslim principality, and shaped its subsequent history.

Modern writers are divided in their opinion as to whether Muhammad Bakhtyār read the *khutbah* and issued coins *in his own name* or in the name of Sultan Mu'iz-uddin Ghuri. Though the court-chroniclers of the Mamluk Sultans of Delhi practised an economy of truth, and were ingeniously vague on this point (*khutbah wa sikkah dar har khittah qāim kard*), later Persian writers of repute explicitly mention that Malik Ikhtyāruddin Muhammad Bakhtyār "assumed the canopy, and had prayers read, and coins struck in his own name" [*T. Akb.* tr. 51]. We have grounds for believing that Malik Ikhtyār-uddin might not have assumed the title of Sultan, but he certainly assumed the prerogatives of having the *khutbah* recited and coins minted in his own name. Mosques, *madrāsas* (schools of Muslim learning) and *Khānqāhs* (monasteries) arose in the new abode of Islam through Muhammad Bakhtyār's beneficence, and his example was worthily imitated by his Amirs.[1] These have all perished, and even his last resting place in Devkot or Bihar none of his countrymen remembers today. But his fame endures and will endure so long as Islam survives in the land. His chief monument of glory was the Muslim principality of Lakhnawati with traditions of independent origin, which not only survived his death but went on expanding into the glorious Sultanate of Gaur.

V. THE KHILJI CIVIL WAR (*c.* 1206-1212 A.D.)

The murder of Malik Ikhtyār-uddin Muhammad Bakhtyār Khilji (Aug. 1206 A.D.) was followed by an interregnum and civil war which ended only when the notorious Ali Mardān paid with his life the penalty for Bakhtyār's blood in about 1212 A.D. after a chequered career of exile in Delhi, captivity at Ghazni, and a reign of terror at Lakhnawati. Muhammad Shirān Khilji, having heard the news of the tragic end of his master, hurriedly marched away with his army from Lakhnor or Nagar in the Birbhum district and reached Devkot (October-November, 1206) to punish Ali Mardān,

[1] Muhammad Bakhtyār is said to have built a new capital after his own name which, however, became better known as Gaur. He is also credited by popular tradition with having built Devkot near Dinajpur, and also the city of Rangpur, the one really founded much earlier than the Muslim conquest, and the other of much later origin. However, the tradition is not without a foundation of truth; because Muhammad Bakhtyār built a cantonment town (*Damdamah*) near the site of the Hindu city of Devkot; similarly a little to the north of the ruins of another *Damdamah* of Bakhtyār the city of Rangpur grew up at a later period.

who, however, had gone away to his own fief of Barsālā in the Ghorāghāt region. He performed the rites of mourning for Bakhtyār who was buried perhaps somewhere in the neighbourhood of Devkot,—and thereafter attacked Ali Mardān in his fief. Ali Mardān was captured and imprisoned, and the interregnum terminated with election of Muhammad Shirān by the Khilji Amirs as the ruler of Lakhnawati (*c.* 1207 A.D.) Meanwhile momentous events had happened abroad. Sultan Mu'iz-uddin Ghuri had died by the dagger of a heretical assassin (3rd Shaban, 602 A.H.=15 March 1206) ; Qutbuddin Aibak celebrated at Lahor his coronation as an independent Sultan of Hindustan (17th Zilqadah, 602=25 June 1206) ; and things were in the melting-pot on the other side of the Indus on account of a tripartite fight among Tāj-uddin Yalduz of Ghazni, Ghuri princes of Firuzkoh, and Sultān Muhammad Khwārizmshah of Khorāsān.

The times were unsettled when Malik 'Izz-uddin Muhammad Shirān Khilji was raised to the throne of Lakhnawati, and more uncertain was the loyalty of his own Amirs, each of whom considered himself better than the others for the premier position in the State. Muhammad Shirān was a man of extraordinary courage, sagacity and benevolence; but the most powerful Lord Marcher of the previous regime found himself the weakest of rulers with his hands tied by the power and pretensions of the Khilji oligarchy at home, and threatened from abroad by the aggressive imperialism of the Sultanate of Delhi. He, however, maintained the *status quo* within his principality, confirming each Amir in his own fief, and showed no vindictiveness against the partisans of the rebel Ali Mardān. With regard to Delhi he continued the same traditions of his own independence,—enjoyment of sovereignty without the title which might provoke a quarrel with the Sultanate of Delhi. We are not told by Minhāj what became of Muhammad Bakhtyār's possessions in Bihar after his death. The ruler of Lakhnawati was perhaps too weak to reassert his authority over that province, and we also do not hear of any other feudatory of Muhammad Bakhtyār rising to power in that region. There are reasons for holding that the submerged Hindu principalities in Bihar about this time threw the scattered Muslim outposts there on the defensive, and a considerable shifting of the population was going on within that province owing to the immigration of Gahadwār and Parmār Rajputs ousted from regions further west and north-west by the Muslims. At any rate Bihar seems to have passed silently within Sultan Qutbuddin's sphere of authority.

The peace of the Khilji principality was suddenly broken by Ali Mardān again, who having won over his custodian Bābā Hāji

Ispāhāni[1] (the *Kotwāl* of some place in Ali Mardān's fief), escaped from his confinement, took refuge with Sultan Qutbuddin Aibak at Delhi about the middle of the year 1207 A.D. (603 A.H.), and instigated him to send an army against Malik 'Izz-uddin Muhammad Shirān. Sultan Qutbuddin ordered his governor of the province of Oudh, Qāe-māz Rumi, to march into the territory of Lakhnawati ostensibly to settle disputes among the Khilji Amirs and place each in his own fief. Accordingly, Qāe-māz Rumi started from Oudh on his enterprise after the rainy season of 1207 A.D., and when he crossed the river Kosi, Husām-uddin 'Iwaz, the feudatory of Gangarah (identified with the later *sarkar* of Tānda) hurried to receive him and place his services at his disposal. This treachery and defection on the part of 'Iwaz, the premier noble of Lakhnawati after the fall of Ali Mardān, practically decided the issue. The Khilji principality had not yet recovered from the disastrous effects of Bakhtyār's Tibet expedition which had cost him his finest and largest army, and left only widows and orphans at Devkot to curse its memory. Malik 'Izz-uddin evacuated Devkot and retreated with his army perhaps eastward beyond the Punarbhavā river where the invaders could not pursue him without risk. Qāe-māz Rumi occupied Devkot and is not mentioned as having ever proceeded against the city of Lakhnawati which had been relegated to an obscure position after its capture by Muhammad Bakhtyār. Husām-uddin 'Iwaz who had been the fief-holder of *Gangtori*[2] in the riverain tract at the mouth of the Kosi, now " became the fief-holder of Devkot at the suggestion (*ba-ishārat*) of Qāe-māz Rumi." So under this arrangement the Khilji principality was to be governed from Devkot by a protégé of the Delhi Sultan in exclusion of Malik 'Izz-uddin Muhammad Shirān. After having installed Husām-uddin 'Iwaz at Devkot, the Oudh governor started on his homeward march; but before he crossed the frontier, news reached him that Malik 'Izz-uddin Muhammad Shirān and other Khilji Amirs had reassembled their forces and were meditating an attack on Devkot. Qāe-māz Rumi at once retraced his steps from half-way on his return march, fought a battle and inflicted a decisive defeat on

[1] The words used in the text rendered literally give: "Ali Mardān by some device got the Kotwal to pledge his right hand," *i.e.* to enter into some sort of pact or engagement with himself "and promise him safety." See Hodivala,—*Studies*. 210.

[2] *Nasiri, Text*. 158. Gangtori is certainly the most correct reading in preference to half-a-dozen misleading variants. Martin mentions such a place in the region at the mouth of the Kosi in *pargana* Gurguribah. We need not look for a *Kangore* in Dinajpur or Rangpur as Blochmann casually suggests. Stewart correctly gives "Gungowtry" (*History of Bengal*, 85), and Thomas also does the same (*JRAS*. N. S. VI. 345).

Muhammad Shirān, who fled with the Khilji Amirs in the direction of Mosedā and Santosh (Mahi-ganj in the modern Bogrā district).

Thus ended in gloom and failure Malik 'Izz-uddin Muhammad's short rule of about a year[1] (1207-1208 A.D.). No coins of his reign have hitherto come to light. What became of him after his retreat to his former fief on the banks of the Ātreyi river is not definitely known. He did not make any other attempt to recover Devkot, nor did Husām-uddin 'Iwaz disturb him in Mosedā and Santosh where he preferred to die a sovereign rather than submit to the vassalage of Delhi. Minhāj says that after his defeat quarrels broke out among the Khilji Amirs and he "became a martyr" in their hands; but according to a later tradition he was killed in an engagement with some Hindu *zamindar* of that region. It is not likely that a bold and self-reliant soldier like Muhammad Shirān would sit idly brooding over his loss of Devkot when within easy reach of him lay enough of infidel territory to conquer and rule in independence of Delhi. His last remains lie entombed in Santosh on the bank of the Ātreyi. Husām-uddin 'Iwaz ruled over the greater part of the principality of Lakhnawati as a vassal of the Delhi Sultanate during the intervening period of about two years till Ali Mardān again appeared on the scene (*c.* 1208-1210).

Sultan Qutbuddin found the fugitive Khilji chief from Lakhnawati a valuable acquisition to his Court, where few indeed could match Ali Mardān in dare-devil courage and far less in bragging. When the Sultan took the field against his formidable adversary, Malik Tāj-uddin Yalduz of Ghazni who had invaded the Punjab about the middle of the year 1208 A.D., Ali Mardan accompanied him to Lahor, and thence to Ghazni in the victorious train of the Sultan. Ali Mardān tasted the pleasures of Qutbuddin's riotous reign of forty days in that city, and afterwards fell a prisoner into the hands of the Turks during Qutbuddin's precipitate retreat towards Hindustan (605 A.H.=1208-1209). But captivity meant only a change of patrons for Ali Mardān, whom Tāj-uddin also found no less worthy and acceptable a courtier. There he became very intimate with a Khilji tribesman of his clan, Sālār Zafar, a noble of high rank at Ghazni. It is said that one day when Ali Mardān had gone on a hunting excursion in the retinue of Sultān Tāj-uddin, he offered to kill the Sultān with one arrow if his friend Sālār Zafar would care to sit on the throne of Ghazni! But Sālār Zafar bade

[1] *Riyaz* (Trans. 69) says Malik 'Izzuddin Muhammad Shirān, who succeeded Muhammad Bakhtyār, was slain by Ali Mardān Khilji within eight months of his accession. We follow Minhāj and reject the statements of *Riyaz*, and also those of Stewart; *e.g.* Shirān's flight to *Koch Bihar*, appointment of an imperial Dewān at Devkot to receive the imperial portion of the revenues, etc. (*History of Bengal*, 32).

him farewell with a gift of two horses to carry him across the border. Ali Mardān Khilji after a year's detention at Ghazni rejoined Sultan Qutbuddin at Lahor perhaps in the beginning of 1210 A.D. His services and sufferings were rewarded by the Sultan who now appointed him Viceroy of Lakhnawati and dismissed him with rich honours. But the viceroyalty of Bengal in the early days of the Delhi Sultanate was as dubious a gift as an assignment on the revenue of Chittagong to a Delhi noble during the Mughal empire. Ali Mardān knew well the measure of his popularity with the Khilji nobles of Lakhnawati, where the memory of his black deeds was still green and there was no knowing whether Husām-uddin 'Iwaz in spite of his lip allegiance to Sultan Qutbuddin would give him peaceful possession of the country. So before his departure he must have recruited a large following of sturdy and adventurous Turks at Lahor which had at this time become the dumping-ground of fresh immigrants from beyond the Indus on account of the pressure of the Khwārizm armies on Ghur and Ghazni. It was as the leader of a second and a mightier wave of Turkish migration that Ali Mardān crossed the Kosi that year, perhaps in March, 1210 A.D.

However, Ali Mardān did not encounter any opposition, and was on the contrary honourably received by 'Iwaz who had advanced from Devkot to the bank of the Kosi to welcome the Delhi Viceroy. Of all the Khilji Maliks, Husām-uddin was the most level-headed politician, steadfast in ambition, unfettered by any scruple or sentiment, possessed of the rare gift of making himself acceptable even to his prospective rivals, and too clever to place all his cards on the table a minute too soon. He now chose to retire to the background under the ominous shadow of Ali Mardān's rule in Lakhnawati, biding, however, his time for a more favourable turn of affairs. Never since the time of Muhammad Bakhtyār had the authority of any ruler been so despotic and absolute at home or dreaded so much abroad, as it was during Ali Mardān's regime of a little more than two years. Ali Mardān restored the political unity of the Muslim principality by subduing the partisans of the late Malik 'Izz-uddin Muhammad Shirān whom 'Iwaz had left to themselves. His power rested on the support of the foreign soldiery who had accompanied him from Lahor, and who in their new home were bound to him by ties of common interest against the remnants of the old Khilji oligarchy long domiciled in Bengal. Owing to the influx of a fresh wave of immigrants the Muslim power in Bengal entered on a new phase of expansion. Soon after Ali Mardān had established his authority in Bengal, his master Sultān Qutbuddin died, in November 1210.

Sultan Qutbuddin's death at Lahor without a son or recognised heir threw Northern India into a convulsion and set free the forces of disintegration. The *Muizzi* and *Qutbi* Amirs divided themselves into two factions with their seats of power at Delhi and Lahor, each with a candidate for the Sultanate. Ārām Shah, a reputed son of Qutbuddin, was set up at Lahor, and the Delhi nobles invited Malik 'Iltutmish, Viceroy of Badāyun, to assume the sovereignty of Hindustan. Nāsir-uddin Qubācha of Multan and Sind assumed independence, and Malik Ali Mardān Khilji in Bengal followed suit. Thus Hindustan became, as says Minhāj-i-Sirāj, "sub-divided into four portions......and the territory of Lakhnawati was appropriated by the Khilji Maliks and Sultans." Though Muhammad Bakhtyār and Muhammad Shirān had undoubtedly been independent rulers reading the *khutbah* and also perhaps issuing coins in their own names, it was Ali Mardān who first openly assumed the title of Sultan also.

Sultan Alauddin, as 'Ali Mardān now styled himself, was a man of undoubted ability as a soldier, but impolitic, blood-thirsty and of a murderous disposition (*khun-rez wa qattal*).

"He sent armies in all directions and martyred the greater part of the Khiliji Amirs; the *Rāis* of the surrounding country trembled in fear and sent him tribute and *khirāj*."

This sudden turn of fortune, inflow of wealth, and unbridled power completely turned the head of Sultan Alauddin. He now imagined himself the monarch of all within the ken of his inflamed political vision. Minhāj says,

"He began issuing orders of assignment on different parts of Hindustan, and his tongue uttered empty boastings. Both in public gatherings and open *darbar* (*Jama' wa bārgāh*) he gave himself the airs of the lord of Khurāsān, Ghazni and Ghor, and talked idle nonsense."[1]

In short, Ali Mardān believed what he imagined, gave unblushing vent to what passed in his unbalanced mind, and would become furious if anybody doubted his fancied sovereignty over any portion of the then known Muslim world. Cheats and flatterers gathered thick round him, and he would in all seriousness issue writs of investiture for Ghazni to one, Khurasan to another and Ispahan to a third and liberally provided the grantees with the expenses of travel to their distant *jāgirs* with assurances that his army would soon conquer these countries! But his own subjects groaned under his tyranny. Partly out of policy but mainly actuated by a feeling of vengeance against his Khilji kinsmen who had cast him out, he made the Khilji nobles suffer terribly at his hands. The natural antagonism between the old nobility of the regime of Muhammad

[1] *T. Nasiri.* Text. 159.

Bakhtyār, and the newcomers in the train of Ali Mardān from Delhi, precipitated a reaction against Ali Mardān's tyranny. The Khiljis under their only surviving leader Husām-uddin 'Iwaz entered into a conspiracy, killed Sultan Alauddin Ali Mardān Khilji, and elected Husām-uddin as their ruler (*c.* 1213 A.D.). No coin or inscription of the time of Ali Mardān has hitherto come to light.

There is no direct evidence as to the extent of Sultan Alauddin's possessions[1] at the time of his death. But it admits of no doubt that during his time Bihar, at least eastwards of the river Son, had been again annexed to the Sultanate of Lakhnawati, so that it was easily constituted into a separate province of the Delhi empire by Sultan Iltutmish in 628 A.H. (1230-31 A.D.). Within Bengal proper Alauddin brought "the whole country of Lakhnawati" under his sway and his frontiers in Rāḍh therefore must have extended in the south at least as far as the Ajay river (the modest southern boundary of south Rāḍh); on the east the river Bhāgirathi; in Varind perhaps the boundary remained stationary—a little beyond Devkot in the north, the Karatoyā on the east, and the river Kosi on the west. There had been in the process of the Muslim conquest of Bengal the three traditional stages of raid, occupation and annexation. The region of Lakhnor or Nagar (Rāḍh) had been raided in the time of Muhammad Bakhtyār and occupied by his general Muhammad Shirān in 1206 A.D., and it was annexed by Ali Mardān perhaps in 1211 A.D. A similar operation of raiding was about this time on foot in the region east and south-east of the Karatoyā river which cowed the Hindu rulers of Kāmrup and Bang from whom he is said to have received tribute. The Hindu kingdom of Tirhut also suffered similarly both at the hands of the Muslim governor of Oudh on one side and the ruler of Lakhnawati on the other.

VI. Reign of Sultan Ghyāsuddin 'Iwaz Khilji (*c.* 1213-1227 A.D./A.H. 610-624).

'Iwaz, son of Husain, was a fellow-countryman of Muhammad Bakhtyār, both hailing from the sun-burnt and desert-girt plains of Garamsir or modern Dasht-i-Margo, which then belonged to the

[1] That Bihar was a part of Ali Mardān's kingdom is proved by the fact that the next ruler, Husām-uddin 'Iwaz, is found in undisturbed possession of it till the first expedition of Iltutmish (1225-26 A.D.), and Minhāj does not say that 'Iwaz conquered that province *after* his accession. "The country of Lakhnawati" signifies both its wings, Rāḍh and Varind (*Nasiri, Trans.* 578, 585); however, by Rāḍh the Muslim writers understood only south Rāḍh; Northern Rāḍh was known to them afterwards as the region of Sātgāon.

dominion of Shihābuddin Ghuri. His early career was typical of that of a multitude of other bold adventurers including Muhammad Bakhtyār himself, who migrated to India after Shihābuddin Ghuri's conquest of Delhi and Qanauj (1194 A.D.). It is said that 'Iwaz in his early life earned a hard livelihood in that inhospitable region as an ass-driver carrying loads to distant places; and during one of his journeys he happened to meet two dervishes, men of God, wearing ragged patched gowns, who begged food of him. He took out from his baggage the humble traveller's fare, dried bread and a little sauce—and entertained the dervishes with food and drink. At the time of their departure they blessed the hospitable 'Iwaz saying, "Commander! Go thou to Hindustan; we give unto thee the country up to the place where there is a single Muslim." 'Iwaz returned home, and putting his wife on the ass started for Hindustan and joined Muhammad Bakhtyār, an equally destitute fortune-hunter travelling eastward. However, the ass-driver of Garamsir rose to sovereignty by dint of his valour and sagacity and proved one of the most popular Sultans that ever sat on the throne of Gaur.

Sultan Ghyāsuddin Khilji had come to the throne as the leader of the discontented Khilji baronage of Lakhnawati against Ali Mardān Khilji and his foreign soldiery; and as such the first one or two years of his rule were perhaps occupied in consolidating his authority in Lakhnawati and winning over the new Turkish element to his side. It was perhaps at this time that Vishṇu, the valiant minister and general of the Gaṅga Emperor Anaṅgabhīma III (1211-1238 A.D.) invaded the Rāḍh tract which had been a sort of *No Man's Land,* though the Muslim rulers of Lakhnawati claimed Lakhnor in Birbhum as their frontier. At any rate that frontier post was seized by Vishṇu who had carved out a frontier-march for himself, south of Rāḍh, having perhaps Jājpur (Jājnagar) on the Vaitarani river as the seat of his power. This reverse of fortune damped the spirit of the Muslims for a time, and they could not be easily roused to arms by the Sultan. Their religious frenzy had to be stirred anew by *tazkirs* exhorting "peoples to undertake a *Jihad* and exert themselves for the preservation of the dignity of Islam and the Sultan's throne."[1] It is on record that one such *tazkir* was delivered by one Imām-zādāh of Firuz Koh, Jalāluddin son of Jamāluddin Ghaznavi, in the presence of Sultan Ghyāsuddin, who bestowed on him in gift a large trayful of gold and silver coins. However, Sultan Ghyāsuddin made an expedition to recover Lakhnor (Nagar) in *c.* 1214 A.D.; and this

[1] For the correct interpretation of this passage, wrongly translated in *Elliot.* II. 318, see Hodivala,—*Studies.* 211.

campaign proved a protracted one. The Chhātesvara inscription[1] claims success for the Orissa general Vishṇu who in his "*war with the Moon of the Yavana kingdom* (undoubtedly alluding to Sultan Ghyāsuddin 'Iwaz Khilji)......*performed heroic deeds that baffle description.*" But ultimately the army of Orissa had to withdraw to their own frontier and clear out of Lakhnor. When the territory of Lakhnor "came into his possession," says Minahāj-i-Sirāj, "elephants and much treasure fell into the hands" of the Sultan and he "posted his own Amirs in that place" (*c.* 611 A.H./A.D. 1214-15). Sultan Ghyāsuddin not only restored the prestige of Muslim arms by rolling back the tide of Gaṅga imperialism but also advanced his southern frontier from the bank of the Ajay river to that of the Dāmodar and the borders of Vishnupur. It is said that even the ruler of Jājnagar paid tribute to the Sultan, which however cannot be true of the great King Anaṅgabhīma III of the Gaṅga dynasty; Vishṇu, the Jājpur feudatory of Anaṅgabhīma, might have sought to make peace with the Sultan of Lakhnawati by offering presents as the Muslim army must have reached this time even south of the Dāmodar river as far as Katasin, the next frontier outpost mentioned by Minhāj-i-Sirāj.

Similarly the rulers of "Bang, Kāmrup and Tirhut" are also said to have paid tribute to Sultan Ghyāsuddin. But we have no information regarding the Muslim inroads into these countries, which no doubt suffered aggression at the hands of the Muslims under so able and energetic a ruler as 'Iwaz. The Sultan of Lakhnawati was left undisturbed by Iltutmish from 610 to 622 A.H., *i.e.*, a period of twelve years during which the sword of 'Iwaz did not certainly rust in the scabbard when the weakness and wealth of the neighbouring Hindu rulers offered opportunities for aggression. The old Karṇāṭaka kingdom of Mithilā was about this time breaking into fragments after the death of Arimalladeva, and these princes in despair of holding their possessions in the plains hemmed in between the Muslim province of Oudh on one side and the territory of Lakhnawati on the other—were seeking compensation in the valley of Nepal. The ruler of Eastern Tirhut could not but come within the sphere

[1] *JASB.* LXVIII. 1898, pp. 317-27. I follow Rai Bahadur Monomohan Chakravarti who gives the date of the Chhātesvara inscription as *c.* 1220 A.D., and ascribes the successes described in this inscription as referring to the reign of Anaṅgabhīma III of Orissa. 'Iwaz was undoubtedly the Yavana King of this inscription. (*JASB.* LXXII. 1903, p. 119). Minhāj indirectly corroborates to a certain extent the testimony of Chhātesvara inscription by a clear hint that Lakhnor had slipped out of the hands of the Muslims before 'Iwaz cleared it for himself and appointed his own officers there. (*JASB.* 1903, pp. 118-20; *Nasiri*, Text. 141-43; Banerji—*Orissa.* I; Basu, *JASB.* 1896, pp. 232-34).

of influence of Lakhnawati. As regards the region of Kāmrup east of the Karatoyā, the land was divided among a number of petty chiefs known as *Bārā-Bhuyāns*, none of whom was powerful enough to stand singly against the Muslim power of Lakhnawati. What saved them from actual conquest and annexation was their readiness to combine against a common foe. 'Iwaz perhaps reduced some of them to the position of tributaries. We have no record of any serious Muslim invasion of "Bang" till the closing year of the reign of 'Iwaz (624 A.H./A.D. 1226-27). But it appears probable that aggression against the Sena rulers of Bengal had been going on for several years prior to it. These rulers had by this time lost their possessions to the west of the old course of the Brahmaputra and north of the Ganges, as the absence of any land-grant of theirs in that region indicates. A contemporary Sanskrit work, the *Kārikā* of Hari Miśra, mentions that Keśavasena, son of Lakshmaṇasena, always lived in terror of the Yavanas: "Keśava left the kingdom of Gauḍa;......at this time the Brāhmaṇas were not able to reside there any longer."[1] Viśvarūpasena who ruled at Vikrampur in East Bengal till after the accession of Ghyāsuddin Khilji, was a vigorous king and had in his firm possession at least the modern districts of Dacca, Faridpur, Barisal and Nudia with the title of *Gauḍeśvara*. He might have suffered some loss of territory in Uttara-Rāḍhā which the victorious armies of Ghyāsuddin 'Iwaz might have raided for the first time, a preliminary to annexation in later times But it is extremely doubtful whether the Sena ruler stooped to send any tribute to Lakhnawati as Minhāj-i-Sirāj claims in his account of 'Iwaz.

However, Ghyāsuddin 'Iwaz made a definite bid for the over-lordship of Bengal and the adjoining provinces by transferring the seat of government from Devkot to the historic city of Gauḍa-Lakhnawati,—the possession of which had been associated in men's minds with the sovereignty of Eastern India ever since the days of the Pāla Empire. Hitherto the Turks had neglected Gauḍa and kept to their northernmost frontier town of Devkot as the seat of government for two reasons: first, Devkot was less liable to surprise either by a land army from the upper country or by any hostile river-flotilla during the rains; and secondly because of its comparatively dry climate. The Turks soon realised like the Mughal governors of later times that the horse could guarantee only six months' hold over any distant part of the river-insected Bengal, whereas the boat and the *paik* (footman) commanded superiority during the other half of the year. It was 'Iwaz who first built a flotilla of

[1] N. N. Vasu, *Chronology of the Sena Kings of Bengal*, *JASB*. 1896, p. 22.

war-boats as an indispensable branch of his armament, which a few years after gave a good account of it in his war against Sultan Shamsuddin Iltutmish. So he felt confident in removing the capital of Bengal again to Gauḍa which commanded easy and rapid communication by water with every part of Bengal and also with the important towns of Bihar. It was in the beginning of 616 A.H.[1] (March 1219 to March 1220) that Lakhnawati became the official capital of 'Iwaz. Time has levelled to the dust the glories of Gauḍa under Hindu and Muslim rule, and the ruins of their capitals lie scattered in heaps for miles along the eastern bank of the Kālindi river through which flowed the main current of the Ganges down to the close of the thirteenth century. No memento of the Sena times exists except the ruins of *Ballāl-bāṛi* to mark the site where the city of Lakshmaṇasena stood. Archaeological imagination pictures the city of Lakhnawati as having been situated south of Ballāl-bāṛi, extending from the Phulwāri gate on the north to the Kotwāli (Pātālchandi ?) on the south, the Ganges (Kālindi) on the west[2] to the great stream of the Mahānandā on the east. There was a massive mud-rampart, it is believed, on the eastern side, beginning perhaps at the ruined tower of *Jahrā-talā* at the north-eastern corner where perhaps stood a redoubt now known as the *garh* of Chānd-muni. The whole area was enclosed within an earthen rampart protected on all sides except toward the Ganges by a deep ditch about 150 feet in breadth. Lakhnawati under its Muslim conquerors suffered the concomitant process of destruction, alterations and additions to suit the needs of a great Muslim city. 'Iwaz built more than one Jāma' mosque; other mosques and *madrāsas* also arose on all sides; and the nobles who transferred their residence to the new capital adorned it with beautiful mansions. He further strengthened the defences of the city by building for his own residence the *hisār* of Baskot or Basankot[3] which has hitherto baffled identification. The new fort was designed as a lock (Arabic *Bus*), or a cover (Persian *Bashn* meaning body) of the city of Lakhnawati, and this sufficiently explains its position—"two miles south of *Phul-bāri*" as Cunningham correctly surmises.

The most magnificent work planned by 'Iwaz was the construc-

[1] Vide *infra* App. C. (*Coins and Chronology of the reign of 'Iwaz*).

[2] This is only a tolerable guess that can be made from the accounts of the ruins of Gaur in Ravenshaw's *Gaur*, Creighton's notes, Cunningham's *Report* (*ASC*. XV. 41-42), and Rajani Chakravarti's *Gauḍer-Itihās* (Appendix. II. 3) based on first-hand local knowledge. Rai Bahadur Monmohan Chakravarti's contention that *Tabaqāt-i-Nāsiri* yields evidence as to the situation of the Muslim city on the *western* bank of the Ganges is wrong. (*JASB*. N. S. IV. 1908, p. 282).

[3] Vide *infra* App. B. (*Geographical Notes*).

tion of a series of dykes with arched bridges (*pulhā*) to protect the city and its suburbs from the annual flood, which made accessible, as says Minhāj-i-Sirāj, different parts of the locality formerly inaccessible during the rains except by boat. The Sultan connected the two frontier cities of Devkot (about 70 miles north-east) and Lakhnor (Nagar in the Birbhum district, about 85 miles south-south-west) with his new capital by an unusually wide and high-embanked Grand Trunk Road with ferries on the big rivers like the Ganges on the Lakhnor side and the Mahānandā and the Punarbhavā on the other. The total length of this *pul*[1] (Bengali *jāngāl*) is said to have been ten days' journey (exclusive of ferries), evidently on foot, *i.e.*, about 150 miles; and it ran through a tract that previously used to be inundated every year during the rains and the "route filled up with mud-swamps and morass." This mighty highway of 'Iwaz survived the ravages of time and flood down to the close of the nineteenth century, and "formed two principal lines of communication in the country... being from 80 to 100 feet in breadth and four to five feet in height."[2] Apart from the strategic and commercial importance of this royal high-way, it proved also a real blessing to the inhabitants of a considerable part of the Sultan's kingdom as a great cross-country *bund* that saved their home and harvests from flood—a yearly calamity even now to our people.

The kingdom of Lakhnawati and Bihar enjoyed uninterrupted peace for about twelve years under the vigorous and beneficent rule of Sultan Ghyāsuddin Khilji till the first expedition of Sultan Shamsuddin Iltutmish against Bengal (1225 A.D.). The relation of vassalage of Lakhnawati to the Sultnate of Delhi was severed by Ali Mardān Khilji (1211 A.D.). Qutbuddin having left no legal heir, a quadrangular fight ensued over the question of succession among Iltutmish, Ārāmshāh, Nāsiruddin Qubācha of Sind and Tāj-uddin Yulduz of Ghazni. Though Ārāmshāh died a year after, Tāj-uddin Yulduz appeared on the scene and extended his power as far as the Karnal district. Sultan Iltutmish defeated him finally in 612 A.H. (1215-16 A.D.), but only to make room for the aggression of a more formidable adversary, Nāsiruddin Qubācha. It was only in 614 A.H. (1217-18 A.D.) that Nāsiruddin was defeated by Iltutmish who made peace with his vanquished rival by leaving him in in-

[1] *Pul* in Persian means a bridge, and also a high embankment. What Minhāj-i-Sirāj means by *pul* is a broad road high above the flood level with bridges over the smaller water courses.

[2] Cunningham (*ASC*. xv. 44). Cunningham's arguments in favour of identifying *Lakhnor* with *Kankjol* "16 miles to the south of Rajmahal and the same distance to the south-west of Gaur" are unconvincing. Vide *infra* App. B. (*Geographical Notes*).

dependent possession of Sind and Multān. In the meanwhile Ali Mardān had been killed and 'Iwaz placed on the *takht* of Lakhnawati, and the affairs of 'Iwaz reached such a point, says Minhāj-i-Sirāj, "that the coin of the territory of Lakhnawati was stamped, and the *khutbah* thereof read in his name and they styled him Sultan Ghyāsuddin" (*Nāsiri,* Trans. 581). However, 'Iwaz was not insensible to the defect in his title which might be challenged by the Muslim world, particularly by the Sultan of Delhi. So Sultan Ghyāsuddin had anticipated Iltutmish by seeking investiture from the Abbasid Caliph al-Nāsir, who was credited by the Muslim world as the fountain of right and honour with power to give away to anybody what was not his own. The much-coveted honours and *farmān* from Caliph al-Nāsir perhaps reached Sultan Ghyāsuddin in the month of Rabi-ul-akhir of the year 620 A.H.—an occasion perhaps commemorated by a special issue of coins,[1] though from the date of the earliest extant coins (616 A.H.) he describes himself "a helper" (*nāṣir*) of the Commander of the Faithful. However, the *farmān* of the Abbasid Caliph could not protect Sultan Ghyāsuddin for long from the aggressive designs of Delhi. For the next five years Sultan Shamsuddin Iltutmish had his hands full; the terrible Chenghiz in pursuit of Sultan Jalāluddin Khwārizmshāh appeared on the bank of the Indus in 618 A.H. and Jalāluddin having established himself in the Punjab made unsuccessful attempts first to conquer Delhi and next Multan from Nāsiruddin Qubācha. When Jalāluddin finally recrossed the Indus in 621 A.H. (1224 A.D.), to the great relief of Iltutmish, the latter turned his attention to the hitherto neglected eastern districts, Badāyun, Benares, Qanauj and Oudh, which had to be reconquered slowly from a host of redoubtable Hindu chiefs. It was during this time that Sultan Iltutmish also sent forces against Bihār to wrest it from Sultan Ghyāsuddin Khilji, and at last the Delhi Sultan himself appeared with an army with the intention of conquering Bihār and Bengal from 'Iwaz in 622 A.H. (1225 A.D.). Ghyāsuddin advanced from his capital with his army and his war-boats were towed up the river Ganges. The progress of the Sultan was arested at some point in Bihar, either at Mungir or to the west of the Sikrigally and Teliagarhi passes of the Rajmahal Hills. What followed next was not certainly favourable to Iltutmish, and hence the Delhi chronicler saves the prestige of the Sultan by practising an economy of truth. It is said that a treaty of peace was concluded between the rulers of Delhi and Lakhnawati whereby the latter was forced to pay as indemnity treasure worth eighty lakhs and 38 elephants, and acknowledge the Sultan of Delhi as his

[1] Vide *infra* App. C. (*Chronology and Coins of the reign of 'Iwaz*).

suzerain by reading the *khutbah* and issuing coins in the name of Iltutmish. The Sultan after having put Malik Alauddin Jāni in charge of the province of Bihār retraced his steps. But as soon as the Sultan turned his back 'Iwaz expelled Alauddin Jāni from Bihār. and made further aggressions; how far the other conditions of the alleged treaty were respected by him can be easily inferred. Sultan Shamsuddin swallowed this insult for two long years, after having experienced that Ghyāsuddin Khilji could not be ousted from power by a frontal attack.

Sultan Ghyāsuddin stood ready for a year in his capital, apprehending perhaps a retaliatory expedition by Iltutmish. About this time the Hindus of Oudh under the leadership of one Pṛithu overran the whole province and killed "hundreds and thousands of Musalmans." The situation was so serious that Sultan Shamsuddin Iltutmish had to send his eldest son Prince Nāsiruddin Mahmud with large reinforcements for the subjugation of the rebels. Malik Alauddin Jāni, the dispossessed governor of Bihār, also joined the Prince and became his chief adviser. Sultan Ghyāsuddin having calculated on the pre-occupation of the imperialists with troubles in Oudh, made preparations for invading the Sena kingdom of East Bengal. Little did he suspect the real motive of the Sultan of Delhi in transferring the Prince to the viceroyalty of Oudh, and concentrating large forces on the Tirhut frontier. However, in the beginning of year 624 A.H (c. January, 1227) the ruler of Lakhnawati led an expedition eastward against "Bang." It is not known what part of "Bang" was at this time the scene of operations, though the magnitude of the enterprise can be inferred from the fact that Sultan Ghyāsuddin had left his capital denuded of troops and the river-flotilla. However, news reached him there that the army of Oudh under Prince Nāsiruddin, had suddenly made a dash for Lakhnawati. Ghyāsuddin hurriedly rode for his capital with whatever troops could accompany him. But it was too late; the enemy had already entered the city and surprised the fortress of Basankot. Fate clouded the intelligence of the cautious soldier and politician; and without waiting for reinforcements from the other parts of his territory Ghyāsuddin rashly fought a pitched battle outside his capital with the superior cavalry of Upper India. The inevitable happened; the Sultan and his nobles became captives, and were beheaded by the ruthless victor (624 A.H./c. March, 1227).

Sultan Ghyāsuddin's reign of about fourteen years was a pleasing epoch of peace and prosperity for his kingdom. It was at this time that the terrible Chenghiz Khan, the Scourge of Islam, was devastating the fair Muslim cities of Khorāsān and Trans-Oxiana; but out of this evil came a more permanent gain to Islam in India.

The Muslim States of India received great accession of strength as this Mongol irruption again caused a mass migration of Turks and Turkomans westward as far as Asia Minor and south-eastward as far as Bengal. India became not only the home of a sturdier barbarian race, but also a nursery of Islamic civilization and culture which was slowly retreating before the Mongol barbarism to the banks of the Jamunā and the Mahānandā. Sultan Ghyāsuddin, though originally an ass-driver, proved as liberal a patron of learning and the fine arts as Sultan Iltutmish. The tale of his piety and generosity penetrated beyond the Hindukush, and tempted Islamic learning to Lakhnawati, which city under 'Iwaz became as happy an abode of Islam as the city of Delhi. After 'Ali Mardān,—a night-mare to his unhappy subjects, 'Iwaz came like a veritable blessing of the Almighty; and all through his reign he laboured for the good of his people. Even Sultan Iltutmish on a later occasion during his visit to Lakhnawati, showed respect to the memory of Sultan Ghyāsuddin Khilji, and Minhāj-i-Sirāj, the court-historian of his son Sultan Nāsir-uddin Mahmud (the Younger) penned an eulogy of this noble adversary of the House of Iltutmish about fifteen years after his death. Sultan Ghyāsuddin in his exterior and interior graces was every inch a *Pādshāh,* just, benevolent and wise. He committed in life only one act of indiscretion and only once did he allow his passion to overcome his otherwise cool judgment and sagacity. Without waiting for the next rainy season at a more secure place like Rāḍh, he rushed forth with his exhausted troops to give battle to the enemy and died a noble martyr to liberty.

Sultan Ghyāsuddin 'Iwaz Khilji is the first independent ruler of Bengal whose coins have come to light. His extant coins are dated 616, 617 (or 619 ?), 620 and 621 A.H.; but they bear no mint-name. There is no truth in the theory[1] of numismatists from Thomas down to those of our own day that 'Iwaz issued coins till the year 616 A.H. in the name of Sultan Shamsuddin Iltutmish. 'Iwaz always associated the name of Caliph al-Nāsir, the reigning Abbasid sovereigns, with his own name on his coins. If 'Iwaz cared to acknowledge the overlordship of Delhi he would have associated the name of the Delhi ruler with his own, as Daulat Shāh Balka bin Maudud did later on. Though a great patron of architecture and founder of many a benevolent institution, no inscription bearing the name of Sultan Ghyāsuddin Khilji has hitherto come to light.

In the absence of inscriptions or widely scattered mint-names any definition of the boundaries of the kingdom of Lakhnawati at

[1] Vide *infra* App. c. *Chronology and Coins of 'Iwaz*).

the close of Sultan Ghyāsuddin Khilji's reign cannot but be of a hypothetical nature. Within Bengal proper the Sultanate of 'Iwaz consisted of *sarkars* Lakhnawati, Purniah, Tājpur, Panjrah, Ghorāghāt, Barbakābād (a new acquisition); the western part of Bazuhā (portions of Rajshahi and Bogra), on the north and east of the Ganges; Tānda, Sharifābād (Nagar-Birbhum, a new acquisition), a portion of Sulaimānābād (Burdwan, a new acquisition) south of that river. He re-annexed South Bihār and pushed his frontier up to that of the Delhi province of Oudh as far as the mouth of the Gandak in North Bihār. It should however be clearly understood that the dominion of 'Iwaz over this vast tract meant only that there was no first-rate Muslim or Hindu power within this boundary to dispute his title. But as a matter of fact his rule in Bihār or in his newly-acquired territory outside *sarkar* Tānda on the south of the Ganges was of the nature of a military occupation. Outside the home-territory of the days of Muhammad Bakhtyār *i.e.* the tract between the Kosi on the west and perhaps a little beyond the Punarbhavā in the east, Devkot on the north and the Ganges in the south—there were powerful Hindu Rajahs strewn all over the country, who followed the policy of *"vetasi-vṛitti"* (*i.e.* to bend like the supple cane under pressure of the tide and become straight again) with regard to the Muslim rulers of Lakhnawati. The result was that the same tract had to be conquered several times by Muslim armies before the permanent annexation of it. Neither Bengal, nor in fact any other part of India, was conquered by a few cavalry dashes of the Turks as the unenlightened impression goes. The whole of Bengal was never conquered or even visited by Muslim armies during the pre-Mughal period. Muslim rule was not well-established beyond Varind till the foundation of the independent Bengal Sultanate under the house of Balban about 100 years after the death of Sultan Ghyāsuddin Khilji.

APPENDIX A

THE RACE, PARENTAGE, AND DATES OF MUHAMMAD BAKHTYĀR KHILJI

At the present advanced stage of our studies it is unnecessary to discuss at length Major Raverty's imaginary readings of MSS., hypercritical corrections of his predecessors, and fantastic reasonings based on such a delusive foundation. Briefly speaking, they have been all rejected in this chapter, except where specifically admitted.

Raverty's theory that this hero belonged to a Turkish tribe named Khalj.—The latest and most important contribution on the question is M. V. Minorsky's paper, "*The Turkish Dialect of Khalaj,*"[1] in which it is stated that according to an old legend they were believed to be a lost tribe of Turkomans, and that in the thirteenth century they were regarded as a separate race from the Turks. One contemporary writer, Najib Bakran, in his *Jahān-numā* (written c. 1200-1300) says, "The Khalaj are a tribe of Turks who migrated to Zābulistān. In the district of Ghazni where they reside,......on account of the heat of the air their complexion has changed and tended towards blackness; their tongue too has undergone alterations and become a different language." Minorsky holds, as against Raverty, that "the historical data all point to the transformation of the Turkish *Khalaj* into the Afghan *Ghilzai.*" There is a passage in the printed text of the *Tārikh-i-Guzidā* (a work composed in 730 A.H., and its extant MS. transcribed in 857 A.H.) in which this tribal name is written with clear diacritical marks as *Khelji* (p. 413). The Indian pronunciation is *Khilji.* Minhāj-i-Sirāj himself differentiates the Khalji from the Turk, when he says that Muhammad Bakhtyār "appointed two *amirs,* one a Turk slave and the other a Khalji," (*Text,* p. 152). Most of the early Indian writers used the word *Turk* in a vague general way, as when Amir Khusrau calls the Mongols a race of the Turks. It is therefore nearer the truth to call the Khiljis Turkoman or Tartar by ethnic origin.

The hero's name.—Raverty's *izafat*-mania has led him to name the conqueror of Bengal, Muhammad *the son* of Bakhtyār (as also Ali the *son of* Mardān, p. 576*n* of his translation). He found the connecting link *bin* (son of) in the name of our hero, in only four out of the twelve MSS. of *T.N.* consulted by him, and the MS

[1] *BSOS.* x. 1940, pp. 417 ff.

which he piously accepts as "a precious *autograph* of the author" is so modern that it explains Qanauj as *Shergarh,*—a title really given to it by Sher Shah Sur about 1540 (p. 627 of Raverty's trans.; reading rejected in the Bib. Ind. text, p. 178).

Raverty's *izafat*-mania would lead us to hold that Aurangzib's rebel son Muhammad Akbar was really "Muhammad the son of Akbar," and that the Emperor Muhammad Aurangzib was (unconsciously) his own father, being really Muhammad the son of Aurangzib. In Shia families the elder son is usually named Ali Akbar and the younger Ali Asghar; are we to assert that these are the sons respectively of Akbar and Asghar? The last leg of Raverty's ridiculous but insistent theory will be knocked away if we can take the following passage in 'Isāmi's *Futuh-us-sālātin,* (verse 1904) as a delicate play upon the hero's name:

"Ba nairavi-e Islām wa *yāri-e-bakht*
Farāwan badast āmada tāj wa takht."

The status of Muhammad Bakhtyār in India.—R. D. Banerji has maintained that Muhammad Bakhtyār was not an officer in any way subordinate to Qutbuddin Aibak when he conquered Bihar and Bengal, and that he acknowledged Qutbuddin's primacy in Muslim India only in 1203 when he visited the latter at Badāyun. This theory has been carried to an absurd extreme. Is it maintained that up to 1203, Bakhtyār's political status was fully equal to Qutbuddin's, as two captains indepedently under the same sovereign at Ghur? If so, why is no mention ever made of Bakhtyār having sent the spoils of his wars to the Sultan at Ghur (or even at Lahor) as in duty bound, or directly communicated with him even once? The very *jagir* in the Mirzāpur district which was the first step in Bakhtyār's ladder of greatness, was a gift from Husām-ud-din, the governor of Oudh, an officer very much lower in the Ghuri army list than Qutbuddin. Qutbuddin's viceroyalty over the Ghuri dominions in India east of the Sutlej cannot be denied, though Bakhtyār's conquests in Bihar and Bengal were achieved by means of adventurers recruited by himself and not with the help of any troops detached by Qutbuddin from his own army. But in the case of a reverse, the conqueror of Bihar would certainly have appealed to Qutbuddin for reinforcements. Such was the invariable process of Muslim advance in new lands.

Dates in the Career of Muhammad Bakhtyār

The one fixed point amidst the uncertainty of dates in Muhammad Bakhtyār's career is furnished by the *Tāj-ul-maāsir,* which says that the fort of Kalinjar capitulated to Qutbuddin Aibak

on 23rd March 1203 A.D. (= 8 Rajab 599 A.H.) and that Aibak returned from this campaign to Badāyun where immediately after his arrival Muhammad Bakhtyār, known for his "world-famous victories" waited on him and presented twenty "mountain-high, blood-drinking dragon-faced elephants.....and many kinds of jewels and money in cash." "His good services had been repeatedly reported to Aibak. With rich presents in return he was given *congee* (for the eastern provinces)."[1] Such elephants could have come only from Bengal, and it was a well-known practice of successful viceroys of that province under the Mughal empire to send such elephants to the Emperor.

The second fixed point is found in a Tibetan work which tells us that Śākya Śrībhadra, a Buddhist scholar of Kashmir visited South Bihar in 1200 A.D. and saw the *vihāras* of Odantapurī and Vikramaśilā already ruined and others in course of destruction at the hands of the Turks, while their monks had fled from Bihar to the Jagaddal monastery in Bengal.[2] This proves that Bengal had not yet been conquered by the Muslims. The date of the sack of Bihar Sharif (1199) which we can infer from this travel-book, is corroborated by Dr. R. G. Basak, who calculates from Gayākara Miśra's MS. that Govindapāla lost Odantapuri *vihāra* in 1199 which was the 38th and terminal year of his reign.[3]

Applying these facts to the history of Muhammad Bakhtyār as given in the *Tabaqāt-i-Nāsiri* (a work completed in 1260), we can reconstruct the story of his career, with a fair approach to certainty, as below:

1. Bakhtyār comes to Hindustan in search of bread, c. 591 A.H. (1195 A.D.), after the defeat of Jayachchandra of Qanauj. Enters the service of Hizbar-ud-din, governor of Badāyun.
2. Is granted a *jagir* in the Mirzāpur district by Husām-ud-din, governor of Oudh, 1196.
3. Conducts raids in the direction of Bihār and Muner, c. 593-594 (1197-98).
4. Sacks the walled *city* (*hisār*) of Bihār, c. February 1199.
5. Reduces the *province* of Bihār to submission, two winters, c. October 1199—January 1201.
6. Surprises the city of Nudiā, *c.* January 1201.
7. Captures Gaur city and occupies North Bengal (Varendra), October 1201–January 1203.

[1] *TM.*, Sarkar MS. pp. 261, 265-267. [2] S. S. Das in *JASB.*
[3] *PHC.* 1939, p. 532.

8. Visits Qutbuddin Aibak at Badāyun, *c.* May 1203.
9. Invades "Tibet," *c.* March–June 1206.
10. Death at Devkot, *c.* August 1206.

TN. alleges (*Text,* p. 148) that after the spoliation of the walled college ("the whole of this *hisār* and *shahr* was a Madrasa, the word *Bihār* being the Hindu name for a Madrasa"), "Bakhtyār paid a visit to Sultan [wrong anticipation of his title] Qutbuddin with much of the booty and was highly honoured and favoured." This may refer to an earlier visit to Qutbuddin unrecorded in *Tāj-ul-maāsir.* I can see nothing improbable in a very subordinate captain—a mere jagirdar under a provincial governor, and therefore *two* degrees below Qutbud-din (the royal representative at Delhi)—trying to secure honour and armed support at the Court of the Indian viceroy of their supreme master, the Ghuri king. But Minhāj's silence about the second and undeniable visit of Bakhtyār to Qutb *after* the conquest of Bengal, lends support to the view that the old man's memory was at fault and that he has confounded the two visits together.

Minhāj continues,

"After being honoured by Qutb-ud-din Aibak with a special robe, Bakhtyār returned and went towards Bihār (province), and fear of him took a total hold of the hearts of the infidels on all sides of the countries of Lakhnauti, Bihār, Bang and Kāmrup" (Text, p. 148). "After returning from the court of Qutb-ud-din Bakhtyār conquered Bihār, (*i.e.,* the *province* of Bihār including Vikramśilā in the Bhāgalpur division, *vide* Śrībhadra's diary). Rāi Lakhmania sent out agents (to Mirzāpur ?) to find out if the personal appearance of Bakhtyār agreed with those of the prophesied Turkish destroyer of his kingdom, and these spies reported that it was so. Then the Brahmans and rich traders began to leave Nudiā and flee to Sylhet, Bang and Kāmrup."

"The year following *this,* (*i.e.,* not the sack of Bihār city in 1199, but the subjugation of the *province* of Bihār, an affair of not less than two years), Muhammad Bakhtyār marched out of Bihār and suddenly entered the city of Nudiā." (Text, p. 150).

Therefore the surprise of Nadia has to be placed about January 1201. It was a mere raid, and the occupation and administrative control of the province (North Bengal) must have occupied two more dry seasons (October 1201–February 1203). A shorter period than this could not have enabled the Muslims to make their position in Bengal so secure as to permit their chieftain to leave the province and visit distant Badāyun with his choice troops and bodyguards. This supposition exactly fits in with Bakhtyār's authenticated visit to Aibak in *c.* May 1203.

Minhāj-i-Sirāj nowhere mentions any *siege* of Lakhnawati and its capture, but simply says that Bakhtyār destroyed Nudiā and "in the *mauza* where Lakhnawati is situated he established his

capital." There was perhaps no *siege*, but at best a blockade of Lakhnawati. Before the advent of the rains of 1201, Bakhtyār appears to have reduced the country between the upper region east of the Mahānandā and west of the Karatoyā in search of a secure place for cantonment for which he chose Devkot on the east bank of the Punarbhavā river. Like later Mughal generals, Bakhtyār stood on the defensive during the rains and assumed the offensive in the next campaigning season or autumn. We learn from Hindu sources that "Bakhtyār plundered the merchants of Yogi-bhavan near Bogra and captured the wealth of the Senas ruling on the banks of the Karatoyā."[1] This may have been in the dry season of 1201-1202 A.D. According to Hindu tradition Gaur held out for a long time against the Muslims, which appears to be true. It was perhaps evacuated by the Hindus during the rainy season of 1202 A.D. (say August) when the Turks had gone back to their cantonment (598 A.D.). We consider the *śloka* in *Śekh-śubhodayā* yielding the date 1203 A.D. for the fall of Gaur as spurious.

[1] *Laghu-bhārata* quoted by Rajani Chakravarti in *Gauḍer-Itihāsa*, Pt. II. 2.

APPENDIX B

GEOGRAPHICAL NOTES ON SOME PLACES

1. *Adwand-Bihar*: The present Muslim town of Bihār Sharif (Lat. 25-11'N. Long 85-31'E) indicates the site where the famous University-town stood. It was also the capital of the Pāla kings, and Vallālasena is said to have suffered "repeated repulses" at the hands of the lord of Odantanpur.[1] Such a strongly fortified capital city had certainly been conquered not by a random raid as Minhāj's informants tell us. This place was also known as *Adwand-Bihar* to the Arabs (See Hodivala-*Studies*. 89).

2. *Baskot or Basan-kot*: Cunningham makes the most astounding remark that he is "inclined to identify *Basankot* of 'Iwaz with a mound of Bhasubihār near Mahāsthāngarh, more than one hundred miles from Lakhnawati" (*ASC*. xv. 104). Monomohan Chakravarti admits that Basankot was near Lakhnawati. It cannot be Ballalbāṛi or the transformation of any Hindu fort as he imagines; it was, according to Minhāj, altogether a new structure.[2] Rajani Chakravarti mentions a covering fortress of Gaur, situated midway between the *Phul-bāri* gate and *Kotwāli* gate of Gaur. It is a sort of polygon with a mud-wall and a ditch. This answers to the position of Basankot very well, if it is conceded that this polygon was *outside* the city.[3] According to Minhāj, there was a fairly large space between the city and the *hisār* of Basan-kot where in later times rival armies fought.

3. *Barsaul* (*TA*. Newalkishore Press. 24) Trans. I. *Barsaul*. (Tabaqat-i-Akbari); *Narnaul* (*Muntakhab-ut-tawarikh*. Text. 59).

Narnaul of Badayuni's text is evidently the scribe's improvement on Nizamuddin's *Barsaul*, as scribes have always a tendency to substitute places well-known to themselves for obscure ones in the MSS. they copy. Narnaul is a famous town in the Punjab, and therefore stands beyond probability. *Naran-koe* was left unidentified by Blochmann,[4] with the remark that it was "very likely the name of a region east of the Karatoya." Mr. Banerji has also left *Naran-koe* as it is in his book. It has not been possible for me also to locate any such place in the Karatoyā region where the fief

[1] *Vallāla-charita*; Nundolal Dey, *Notes on Ancient Aṅga*, *JASB*. 1914, p. 331.
[2] Chakravarti, *JASB*. N.S. v. 1909, p. 201; *Nāsiri*. Text. 151.
[3] *Gauḍer-Itihāsa*, II. App. 3.
[4] *JASB*. 1875, No. 3, p. 285.

of Ali Mardān was perhaps situated. As the *Tabaqāt-i-Nāsiri* is the chief source drawn upon by Nizamuddin and others it is uncritical to prefer *Barsaul* or *Barsauli* to *Naran-koe* or *Narkoti* of a nearer contemporary. However, as *Narankoe* (Narayan-kot ?) cannot be identified, I have preferred *Barsaul* or *Barsauli* as the *jagir* of Ali Mardān Khilji. If Blochmann, whom I have followed, is right in guessing that it must be some place in the Karatoyā region, I should like to identify *Barsaul* with *Barsala* of the *Ain-i-Akbari* which puts it as a *mahal* near the town of *Nusratābād* in Sarkar *Ghorāghāt*; *Barsala* is not indicated in Rennell's map. *Narayanpur* (Jalal-garh) in the Purniah district is described by Martin as the frontier outpost on the Kosi side. *Narankoe* or *diyar-i-koe* may be taken as mistakes for *diyar-i-Kosi*.[1]

4. Devkot: Devkot or Devikot was a very ancient city; its other name is said to have been *Bāṇa-pura* (Bonnogor of Martin). The Muslim town was perhaps at Dumdumah, a cantonment built near the old Hindu city, and both became known by the same name. Devkot during the time of Bakhtyār, and also under the later Khiljis, played a more important part than Lakhnawati. It was situated in *pargana* Gangārāmpur of Dinājpur district. The ruins of Bān-nagar indicate the situation of the old city. Martin says, "The proper name of Dumdumah is Devi Koth. It received its present appelation......from its having been a military station during the early part of the Muhammedan government......"[2] Cunningham more fully describes it thus:

> "The old fort Devikot is situated on the left or eastern bank of the Punarbhava River, 33 miles to the north-east of Pandua, 18 miles to the south-south-west of Dinajpur, and 70 miles to the north-north-east of the citadel of Gaur......To the north of Devikot is a walled enclosure about 100 feet square, and to the north of this there is a second fortified enclosure of about the same size. Both these are surrounded by massive earthen ramparts and broad ditches......To the south lies the Muhammadan quarter of Damdama or the encampment, extending in a straggling way down......From this point there is an embanked road leading to the east past the two great lakes called Dahal Dighi and Kala Dighi. The former is supposed to be of Muhammadan construction as it lies from east to west..........."[3]

Here we have an accurate picture of the first capital of the Muslim power in Bengal; the enclosed squares were redoubts on the north, and the cantonment in the south an additional defence to the old Hindu fort.[4]

[1] For Narayanpur-Jalalgarh see Martin, *Eastern India*, III. 82.
[2] Martin, *Eastern India*, II. 660.
[3] *ASC*. XV. 95-100.
[4] See also Kunja Govinda Goswami, *PHC*. 1939, pp. 197 ff.

5. Fief of Husām-uddin 'Iwaz : *Ganguri* (*Nāsiri*. Trans. 575). Blochmann has not definitely identified *Ganguri* for which he suggests the reading *Kangor*. Mr. R. D. Banerji keeps to *Ganguri* leaving it unidentified. The fact that Husām-uddin is mentioned as having gone from his fief to receive Qāe-māz Rumi, who was coming down from Oudh to Bengal—apparently on the frontier—perhaps indicates that his fief of *Ganguri* was in that direction. I identify *Ganguri* with mahal *Gankarah* in Sarkar *Tanda* of Todarmal's Rent-roll. (*Ain. Trans.* III. 130). Taking into consideration its strategic position with regard to Bakhtyār's principality of Lakhnawati, its location in the later Sarkar of *Tanda* is reasonable.

6. *Jaj-nagar* of the *Tabaqāt-i-Nāsiri*: I agree with Rai Bahadur Monmohan Chakravarti in holding that "In the *Tabaqāt-i-Nāsiri* Jajnagar always means Orissa, probably north Orissa. The name is derived from Jajpur town on the bank of the Vaitarani river, an old headquarter of north-Orissa."[1] But Mr. R. D. Banerji held to the last, "Jajnagar is Jajllanagar....in Chhattisgarh district," though he admits, "The majority of Mussalman writers of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries mention Jajnagar when they intend to refer to Orissa."[2]

7. *Lakhnor* of the *T. Nāsiri*: There is hardly any difference of opinion among scholars that *Lakhnor* of the Muslim writers was situated "somewhere near the ancient town of Nagar in the Birbhum district."[3] Blochmann's *Lakarkuda* in Birbhum[4] is to be definitely rejected in favour of *Nagar* or Rajnagar, once perhaps the capital of some Hindu Rajah as the place meant by *Lakhnor*, (Lakaur, *Langaur*, variants in the text of *Nasiri*). Nagore is in Lat. 23-57′, *Long.* 87-19′.[5] Bhattasali discusses the question of identification of Lakhnor with Nagar very ably, and his opinion I accept as accurate.[6]

8. *Masidah and Santosh*: *Santosh* is given as *pargana* No. 68 of Dinajpur district by Hunter, and *Hasidah* as No. 58. *Santosh* is modern Mahiganj situated on the eastern bank of the Atreyi river under *thana* Potnitala (Rennell, Sheet No. 7. Lat. 25, N. Long. 1W.). *Moseeda* is shown as a large *pargana* south of Mahiganj and north of *Jangiepour* (Jangipur) extending on both banks of the Atreyi (*ibid.*).[7]

[1] *JASB.* v. 1909, 217.
[2] *History of Orissa*, I. 258.
[2] Banerji-*Orissa*. I, 258.
[4] *JASB.* 1873, p. 212.
[5] For a notice of its ruins, Hunter, *Stat. Bengal*, IV; *ASC.* VIII.
[6] *New Śaktipur Grant of Lakshmaṇasena* (*JRAS.* 1935; see also Hodivala-*Studies*. 212-213).
[7] See also Blochmann, *Contributions* (*JASB.* 1875, pp. 284 ff).

9. *Nudia*: Corruption of Navadvīpa, a well-known place in Bengal. (Lat. 23. 25' ; long. 86. 55'). No memorials of Muhammad Bakhtyār's time I found there except some alleged tombs of *shāhids*. The city surprised by Bakhtyār perhaps stood between *Bilpukur* and *Samudragarh* where alleged ruins of Lakhshmaṇasena's time are pointed out.[1] The location of the old city is the subject of a keen controversy which it is needless to notice.

[1] Rajani Chakravarti, *Gauḍer-Itihāsa*, 204.

APPENDIX C.

COINS AND CHRONOLOGY OF THE REIGN OF SULṬAN GHYASUDDIN 'IWAZ KHILJI

Thomas, a high authority on Numismatics, enunciated a theory in his paper, *Initial Coinage of Bengal,* that Sultan Ghyāsuddin 'Iwaz Khilji issued coins from Bengal mints in the name of the contemporary Delhi Sultan Shamsuddin Iltutmish down to 616 A.H —after which 'Iwaz assumed independence and issued coins in his own name—and again from 622 A.H. to 624 A.H. in the name of Iltutmish after his submission to the imperial authority. This theory of Thomas is not only at variance with the contemporary authority of Minhāj, but also proves unsound on a re-examination of his own arguments. Hoernle in his paper on the Gauhati find of coins,[1] enunciated a very sound principle: "......in the case of coins of Delhi emperors, when no mint is named, it should always be the Imperial mint of Delhi......on the same principle (though the result is different) in the case of the coins of the Bengal Sultan Ghiyāsuddin 'Iwaz which have no mint-name no one could think of any other mint, the latter must be a Bengal mint." He very rightly holds that the coins of Iltutmish found in Bengal and elsewhere were carried from Delhi[2] by his invading armies or governors. We have applied this simple and rational test in assigning to 'Iwaz only those coins which bear the name of the Sultan. The theory of 'Iwaz's vassalage to Delhi nevertheless still haunts the numismatists—a myth that owes its origin chiefly to a gold coin of Iltutmish, dated 616 A.H. with the mention of a mint-name which Thomas at first correctly read as *Nāgor* (a famous place in Rajputāna which had been an important Muslim city during the thirteenth and the fourteenth centuries). But on the discovery of a similar piece in the Kuch-Bihar trove along with the coins of 'Iwaz, he took to a new reading, *Zarb ba-Gaur.* This puzzled Hoernle who says "though the reading *Zarb ba Gaur* is most probably the true one.....it may be an exception."[3] The latest authorities on the subject, Wright and Neville, gave up the untenable reading of *Gaur* but not the theory of 'Iwaz's vassalage to Iltutmish. They have made one whole section of Iltutmish's coins from Bengal mint begin with 614 A.H. Wright reads the name as *Lakur* and thinks the mint was somewhere

[1] Hoernle, *A New Find of Early Muhammadan Coins* (*JASB.* 1881, pp. 53 ff).
[2] *Ibid.* 70.
[3] *JASB.* 1881, p. 70.

in Bengal.[1] Hodivala, a greater master of Arabic and Persian than any other numismatist, does not like Thomas feel "the *need* of the preposition *ba*" after *Kaur*;[2] and as a compromise suggests deciphering the words as "*Nagore*" (in Birbhum).[3]

But we should carefully consider the fact that 'Iwaz does not put mint-name even on his earliest extant silver coin dated the 19th day of Safar, 616 A.H.[4]—apparently a special issue when Lakhnawati became for the first time the capital of the Muslims of Bengal;—and also not on another coin of the same year.[5] Besides *Gaur* is never mentioned as a *city* by Minhāj but as a *balad* or territory (*Nāsiri*. Trans. 588) and Lakhnawati is always spoken as a *shahr*. *Lakhnor* or Nagore was never a mint-town throughout the course of medieval history. If 'Iwaz wished to commemorate its recovery, he would have added *az fath-i-Lakhnor* or some such phrase. It is absurd to suppose that *Nagore* could be substituted for *Lakhnor* on the coins of 'Iwaz. The coins of Iwaz hitherto extant are mentioned below:

1. A silver coin: Weight 164 grns; find-place Dacca district; date the 19th day of Safar, 616 A.H.; no mint-name. (Martin, *ante*)
2. A silver coin: Weight 161 grns; find-place Kuch-Bihar; date 616 A.H.; no mint-name; title—*al-Sultan al-muazzam Ghyas-al-duniya wa al-din Abul Fatha' 'Iwaz bin al-Husain nasir-i-Amir al-muminin.* (Thomas, *ante*).
3. A silver coin: Weight 165 grns; 617 A.H.; a second one of the same date and coin-legend as above; no mint-name; a *third*, weighing 165 grns; date Rabiul-akhir, 617 A.H.; title "*Sultan al-azam........*" and contains name of the Caliph *al-Nasir al-din Illah* (Thomas).
4. A silver coin: Weight 169 grns; dated 20th Rabiul-akhir, 620 A.H.; title *Ghyas-al-duniya wa din...... qasim-i-Amir-al-mominin Sultan al-Salatin fi al-duniya wa din......*; no mint-name (Thomas).
5. A silver coin: Weight 165 grns; no mint-name; find-place Gauhati; dated Jamadiul-akhir, 621 A.H. (unique); title as that given above in the 620 A.H. issue (Hoernle).

[1] *Coins and Metrology of the Sultans of Delhi.*
[2] Thomas, *Initial Coinage of Bengal* (*JASB.* 1873, p. 352, f.n. 1).
[3] See Hodivala-*Studies.* 213.
[4] Martin, *JASB.* 1929. N.S. p. 25.
[5] Thomas, *op. cit.* p. 354.

CHRONOLOGY OF THE REIGN OF SULTAN GHYĀSUDDIN KHILJI

1. Accession: 610 A.H. (*c.* May, 1213 A.D.).
2. Consolidation of authority at Lakhnawati; invasion of Rāḍh by the army of Anaṅgabhīma III (*c.* 1214 A.D.).
3. Repulse of Orissa armies; recovery of Lakhnor; raids in Rāḍh (*c.* 1214-15 A.D.).
4. Transfer of capital to Lakhnawati (616 A.H. ?/1219-20 A.D.).
5. Buildings, roads and embankments constructed (616 A.H. to 621 A.H./1219 to 1224 A.D.).
6. Expedition of Iltutmish against 'Iwaz: 622 A.H. (1225-26).
7. 'Iwaz recovers Bihar from Malik Alauddin Jāni, (*c.* 1226 A.D.).
8. 'Iwaz invades "Bang" (beginning of 624 A.H/January 1227.
9. Alauddin Jāni instigates Prince Nāsiruddin Mahmud Shah to surprise Lakhnawati during the absence of 'Iwaz, (February 1227 A.D.).
10. Defeat, captivity and death of 'Iwaz at the hands of the imperialists (624 A.H./*c.* March-April, 1227).

CHAPTER II

BENGAL UNDER THE MAMLUKS (1227-1287 A.D.)

I. Bengal during the reign of Iltutmish

During this period of sixty years no less than fifteen chiefs are found in authority at Lakhnawati, and of them ten were Mamluks of the imperial Court of Delhi. These Mamluks were men of various nationalities of Central Asia, Khitāi Turk, Qipchaq and Uzbeg, sold into slavery in early life. Before they became governors of Bengal, they had all arisen to the position of powerful Maliks at the Mamluk Court of Delhi, and filled important offices of trust in the imperial house-hold and also held governorships of provinces. They themselves in their turn owned a large body of *mamluks* who constituted the chief source of their masters' power and prestige. Lakhnawati under their rule became a replica of the Imperial Court of Delhi in grandeur and magnificence, and the administrative system they introduced in the province was also a close copy of the administrative system of the empire under the House of Iltutmish—a hierarchy of decentralised minor sovereignties of a feudal character, This was, however, not peculiar to Delhi or Lakhnawati; but the same state of things obtained in every part of the contemporary Muslim world, where, *e.g.* in Egypt, Turkish Mamluks ruled (1250-1517).

The history of this period is a sickening record of internal dissensions, usurpations and murders which the Court of Delhi after the death of Sultan Iltutmish could not punish. The seizure of the government of Lakhnawati was the highest ambition of the governors of neighbouring provinces, Bihar, Oudh, Kanauj and Kārā-Mānikpur; because even after the loss of independence, Gaur-Lakhnawati retained its status of a kingdom, and its possession alone entitled a Malik to the coveted status of *Malik-ush-Sharq* or Lord of the East. Here in Bengal the political maxim gained ground that whosoever could kill or oust the reigning ruler should be acknowledged without demur as its legitimate master and the Bengalees, whether Turks or Hindus, remained generally indifferent to the fate of their rulers and enunciated a constitutional principle of their own that the loyalty of a subject was due to the *masnad* (throne), and not to the person who happened to occupy it. Such

was the inevitable reaction of frequent revolutions in the capital. Like their subjects, the Mamluk rulers of Bengal showed also the same sort of passive loyalty to the throne of Delhi, and most of them proved their fidelity to the salt of Iltutmish by reading the *khutbah,* issuing coins and sending congratulatory offerings and tributes to whomsoever among the members of their master's family would be placed on the throne. Another notable feature of the history of this period was the beginning of a sort of rapprochement between the conquerors and their Hindu subjects. The exodus of upper-class Hindus on a wide scale from the Muslim territory gradually stopped, and now for the first time we come across references to Hindus as a respectable class of inhabitants in the Muslim capital. The Muslim rulers had no internal trouble with regard to their Hindu subjects of Varendra even when the Hindus of Orissa threatened the capital with a siege.

But, on the whole, the fortune of Islam at this period was at a stand-still, and the Muslim power of Lakhnawati suffered relative decay in comparison with the Hindu powers in Kamrup, East Bengal and Orissa. The ancient Hindu principalities in Kāmrup (Kāmtā-Hājo) were supplanted by a powerful confederacy of *Bārā-Bhuyāns* of immigrant Mongoloid tribes. Under the impulse of a Neo-Hinduism the Koch, Mech, Thāru and other Mongoloid tribes assumed the rôle of Kshatriyas, and proved an effective barrier to the progress of Muslim arms in the tract between the Karatoyā and the Subarnasri rivers for about a century: and further east the Shān invaders from Upper Burma under their kings Sukhāphā and his son Sutephā (1268-1281) laid the foundations of the Ahom kingdom of Gauhāti. Hinduism with its wonderful vitality and elasticity strangled the Buddhism of the Shāns who now formed the second line of defence against Islam. When the vigour of the Sena dynasty—too much busy with the purging of society and the readjustment of Kulinism—was on the wane, the over-lordship of the greater part of East and South Bengal passed to a powerful Kāyastha ruling house founded in the second half of the thirteenth century by Daśaratha-Danuja-mādhava of Chandravīpa or the modern Barisal district. The greatest and most direct menace to the Muslim power of Lakhnawati was the mighty Eastern Gaṅgā empire of Orissa. A feudatory of the Gaṅgas who had his seat at Jājpur on the bank of the Vaitarani river (confounded by Muslim historians with the *Rāy* of Jājnagar or the Gaṅgā emperor of Orissa) proved more than a match for the Mamluk rulers of Lakhnawati.

To proceed with the narrative, Prince Nāsiruddin Mahmud who had overthrown Sultan Ghiyāsuddin 'Iwaz Khilji united the provinces

of Oudh and Bengal under one rule and shifted his residence to Lakhnawati. The only good work for which he was remembered at Delhi was that he squandered the treasure of 'Iwaz in presents to all the *ulema,* Sayyids and Sufis of the imperial capital. When the *khilat* and honours from the Abbasid Caliph al-Mustanasir-Bi'llah for Sultan Shamsuddin reached Delhi in the month of Rabi-ul-awwal, 626 AH. (Feb. 1229), the affectionate father sent to his heir-apparent one valuable robe of honour out of the Caliph's *khilat* along with a red umbrella and a red canopy of State and bestowed on him the lofty title of *Malik-ush-Sharq* (Lord of the East). The imperial envoys who brought these gifts to Nāsiruddin took back to Delhi the sad news of the death of the Prince in the month of Jamadi-us-sani of that year (May, 1229), and also perhaps the news that Lakhnawati had been lost to the Sultanate. Nāsiruddin ruled in Lakhnawati for about a year and a half and died of illness a few days after the receipt of kingly honours from his father. As soon as he breathed his last a partisan of 'Iwaz, Malik Ikhtiyāruddin Balkā (the Colt) Khilji, expelled the imperialists from Bengal bag and baggage. The dead body of the Prince was carried to Delhi where it lies buried under a noble mausoleum—known as the Sultan Ghazi's *maqbara*[1]—situated in the village of Mālikpur Koye near Delhi. Malik Ikhtiyāruddin Balkā Khilji ruled in Bengal as an independent king undisturbed by Sultan Iltutmish for about eighteen months. The only token of the reign of this rebel chief is a coin[2] dated 627 A.H. in which he describes himself as *Daulat Shāh bin Maudud* and which retains curiously enough also the name of the Delhi Sultan. Iltutmish led an expedition against Balkā in the beginning of 628 A.H. (Nov. 1230 A.D.), and had the occasion to visit for the first time and admire the memorials of 'Iwaz's beneficent rule. Balkā did not submit easily; he fought against the army of Delhi and for a time eluded capture. Eventually he fell a prisoner and lost his head; Malik Alauddin Jāni, governor of Bihār and governor-designate of Lakhnawati after Prince Nāsiruddin, was put in charge of the government of Bengal and the vacant governorship of Bihar given to Malik Saifuddin Aibak. After having recovered Bengal and settled the administrative arrangements of his eastern provinces, Sultan Shamsuddin Iltutmish returned to Delhi in the month of Rajab of that year (628 A.H. May 1231).

[1] An inscription on this mausoleum gives the deceased prince the title of *Malik-ush-Sharq.* The *maqbara* was built in 629 A.H. (*Epigraphia Indo-Moslemica,* 1909-10, p. 70).

[2] For details, see Chapter II App. A. *Coins and Inscription.*

Malik Alauddin Jāni the next governor was a *Shāh-zādah* of Turkistan who had fled to India from the terror of the Mongol arms. A man of princely ability, his royal blood always boiled in him, and his attitude to the Mamluk Sultan of Delhi was not unlike that of the Timurid Mirzas at the Mughal Court towards the House of Babur. History is silent on the activities of Alauddin Jāni during his short rule of one year and a few months. For some reason he was removed from the governorship.[1] Under the Sultan's orders Malik Saifuddin Aibak vacated the governorship of Bihar to take over the charge of Lakhnawati; and Tughral-Tughān Khan was transferred from Badāun to Bihar. Malik Saifuddin Aibak was a Shamsi Mamluk, a Kārā-Khitāi Turk—more correctly a Tatar—by origin. He possessed all the noble qualities of his race and rose to the front rank of the Maliks of his age. He ruled for three years with vigour, during which he made a raid into the "country of Bang and captured some elephants." Sultan Iltutmish was highly pleased with Aibak's present of elephants from Bengal and bestowed on him the title of *Yughān-tat.* The Sultan breathed his last on the 20th of Shaban 633 A.H. (29 April, 1236 A.D.), and the forces of disorder began to work throughout Hindustan. Saifuddin either died a natural death or was poisoned (as the author of *Riyāz* says), and the period of legitimate and orderly government of Lakhnawati ended with Yughān-tat's death.[2]

II. Usurpations and Civil wars

Events at Delhi after the death of Sultan Shamsuddin Iltutmish had their repercussions on the political life in Bengal. One Aor Khan Aibak, "a Turk of great daring and impetuosity" (perhaps one of the *mamluks* of Saifuddin Aibak)—made himself master of Lakhna-

[1] *Nasiri,* Text. 239. After his removal from Bengal Malik Alauddin Jani is next mentioned as the fiefholder of Lahor after the death of Iltutmish. He was one of the ring-leaders of the baronial revolt against Sultan Ruknuddin and Raziyah. He was killed and his severed head brought to Delhi by Raziyah's troops in 1237 A.D. (*Nasiri,* Trans. 641).

[2] The Indian Museum (Calcutta) inscription (Cunningham, *ASR.* xv. Plate No. xx.) referring to the repair of a well begun by one Qatlagh Khan in the reign of Iltutmish and reputed to be the earliest Muslim inscription in Bengal,—has, as Mr. J. Horovitz has proved satisfactorily (*Epigraphia Indo-Moslemica,* 1911-12, p. 25, Plate xviii. 2) nothing to do with Bengal. The error was due to a confusion about the find-spot which was Abuhar in the Punjab and not *Gaur.* R. D. Banerji did not detect it and hence he says the building of the well was completed during the governorship of Saifuddin Yughān-tat (*Bāngālār Itihāsa,* ii. 49).

wati after the death or murder of Saifuddin. Then Tughān Khan, govornor of Bihar, perhaps demanded the surrender of the province of Lakhnawati from Aor Khan, and led the army of Bihar across the frontier to enforce his claim. A battle was fought between the two Khans in the space between the city of Lakhnawati and the fortress of Bāskot, and in the heat of the action an arrow of Tughral Tughān killed Aor Khan. The partisans of the vanquished chief evacuated the capital, and Tughral Tughān became the master of both the wings of the Muslim territory, Rāḍh and Varind, in addition to his own province of Bihar.

Tughral Tughān Khan was also a *Qārā-Khitāi* Turkish Mamluk trained in the royal household of Iltutmish. His first appointment was that of *Sāqi-i-Khās* or royal cup-bearer, and he was next promoted to the post of *Sar-dawāt-dār* which however brought him bad luck. He lost the Sultan's jewelled pen-case, got a sound beating and was degraded to the position of a *Chashni-gir.* Slowly he recovered his master's favour and was transferred from the kitchen to the stable as *Amir-i-Ākhur.* Minhāj-i-Sirāj who received many favours from Tughral Tughān says with pardonable exaggeration: " He was adorned with all sorts of humanity and sagacity, and graced with many virtues and noble qualities; and in liberality, generosity and power of winning men's hearts, he had no equal." (*Nasiri,* Tr. 736.)

Malik 'Izzuddin Tughral Tughān Khan enjoyed a fairly long lease of power for about nine years (1236-1245 A.D.). Though an usurper, he legalised his authority by procuring from Sultāna Raziyah a formal recognition of his status as the ruler of Bihār and Lakhnawati. He received from her the princely insignia of a *chatr* (umbrella) a red canopy, and standards in return for his protestations of loyalty to the imperial throne and the rich presents which he had sent with his envoys to Delhi. Since then Tughān kept himself aloof from the whirlpool of Court politics and it was his policy to read the *khutbah* and issue coins in the name of whomsoever among the members of Sultan Shamsuddin's family happened to occupy the imperial throne. He also never failed to send congratulatory presents to every Sultan after his accession and so kept the imperial court in good humour. But he steadily pursued all the while his forceful policy of aggression. He started with a successful raid into the kingdom of Tirhut which yielded him rich booty but no submission. He recruited a large army of horse and infantry, and built a strong flotilla of war-boats. But he did not employ his vast military resources in extending the boundary of the Muslim dominion in Bengal which remained stationary since the death of Sultan Ghiyāsuddin 'Iwaz Khilji. He conserved them to make a trial of strength with his fellow-Mamluks, conquer Oudh, Kārā-

Mānikpur and the Ganges-Jumna Doab, and make himself the *de facto* sovereign of Eastern India. He was instigated, it is said, by a Syrian minister of his, Bahāuddin Hilāl. The orbit of Tughral Tughān's ambition can perhaps be measured by the lofty titles he took unto himself as we learn from the only extant inscription of his time found in Bihār (*Majlis-i-'Ala' . . . Ghyās-al-Islām wa al-Musalmain Mughis-al-Muluk wa al-Salātin Abi-al-Fatha' Tughral-al-Sultāni*).[1]

Malik 'Izzuddin Tughral Tughān started on his grand expedition in the beginning of 640 A.H. (*c.* Sept. 1242 A.D.) shortly after the accession of Alauddin Ma'sud Shah on the throne of Delhi (18th Zilqadah 639 A.H./20th May 1242). The army and river-flotilla of Bengal advanced from their base of operations in Bihar up the river Ganges. It is not on record that the victorious progress of Tughral Tughān encountered any resistance at Chunār, Benares or Allahabad before he reached the frontiers of Kārā, situated about 50(?) miles up on the northern bank of the Ganges. Malik Ikhtiyāruddin Qārā-Qash Khan had been appointed governor of Kārā[2] in October 1242 almost about the same time; but he could not possibly reach Kārā from Delhi earlier than the army of Tughān Khan. During this campaign the latter was on the Kārā frontier for some time, and it was there that the historian Minhāj-i-Sirāj had gone from Oudh to interview him. From this place Malik 'Izzuddin Tughral sent his envoy Sharful-Mulk al-Ashari to the imperial Court perhaps with presents and excuses. Sultan Alauddin Mas'ud Shah in return nominated Qazi Jalāluddin Kāshāni to accompany Tughān's envoy to Lakhnawati with his own tokens of favour, a *khilat*, an umbrella and a red canopy of State for *Majlis-i-'Ala Abul Fatha' Tughral.* Meanwhile, the ruler of Lakhnawati with his honoured guest Minhāj-i-Sirāj returned from the confines of Kārā and reached Lakhnawati on the 17th of Zi-hijjah of the same year (640 A.H./7th June 1243). The imperial envoy, Qazi Jalāluddin Kāshāni, was received at court and Tughral invested with the imperial *khilat* on Sunday, the 11th of Rabi-ul-awwal 641 A.H. (29th August 1243) The taper of Tughral's glory burnt brightest on the eve of its extinction.

Tughral Tughān Khan's dream of an East Indian Sultanate was rudely disturbed within a few months of his triumphant entry to Lakhnawati. In the dry season of the year 641 A.H. (*c.* October-

[1] Dated Muharram, 640 A.H.; for details see Chapter II App. A. *Coins and Inscriptions.*

[2] His appointment to Kārā on 25th Jamda I 640 A.H. (*Nāsiri*, Trans. 747).

November, 1243) "the Rāy of Jājnagar," undeterred by the might of Tughral, began "molesting" the territory of Lakhnawati as Minhāj-i-Sirāj mildly puts it. Tughral Tughān's contemporary on the throne of Orissa was Rājā Narasimhadeva I who had succeeded his father Anaṅgabhīmadeva III about 1238 A.D. He seems to have taken advantage of the withdrawal of the army and fleet of Lakhnawati to distant Kārā in the previous year to lead an expedition into Rāḍh and the frontiers of Vaṅga. In the campaigning season of 1242 he avoided rousing the suspicions of the Turks of Southern Rāḍh, strongly posted in Nagar in the Birbhum district, and sought easier conquests east of the river Bhāgirathi. This tract might have been occasionally raided during the period of the Khilji ascendancy, but no Muslim army had visited it after the death of Sultan Ghiyāsuddin Khilji (1227 A.D.). Saptagrām (Sātgāon) was still unsubdued and the district of Nadia was strewn with semi-independent Hindu Rajas. These were little likely to offer any opposition to the northward expansion of the mighty Hindu power of Orissa which was their only safeguard against the rapacity of the Turks. Tughral Tughān slept over this dangerous aggression of Orissa on his immediate frontier till the emboldened enemy actually began ravaging his own possessions on the Lakhnor side in the dry season of 1243. Where were the army and the fleet of Tughral? He could not take the field to repel the Hindu invasion till the month of Shawwal 641 A.H. (mid March, 1244 A.D.) when Minhāj-i-Sirāj, the historian, also joined in "this holy war." The army of Tughral Tughān marched along the broad highway of 'Iwaz as far as Lakhnor, and pushed further south-east after having crossed the rivers Ajay and Dāmodar. The army of Orissa retreated without fighting to their frontier fortress of Katāsin,[1] in a region full of jungle and cane-bushes suited for ambush and surprise. Tughān's objective was perhaps some fort north of Vishnupur in the Bankura district.

On Saturday morning 6th of Ziqadah 641 (16th April 1244) the Turks delivered an assult on the fort of Katāsin, carried two

[1] Raverty searched for Katāsin on the bank of the Mahānadi river, and N. Vasu in Midnapur (Rai-Baniya-garh); Blochmann cautiously avoids any guess, but holds correctly that it was somewhere in Western Bengal. Dr. Bhattasali takes up his cue from Blochmann, and arrives at a very satisfactory conclusion that Katasin may be Kathasanga 5 miles south-east of Sonamukhi, about 12 miles south of the Dāmodar, situated on the boundary of Vishnupur in the Bankura district (*JRAS*, January 1935, p. 109). *Kistnagur* on Rennell's Atlas (Sheet No. VII) situated in the same locality, about twenty-five miles west-south west of Burdwan, and about the same distance east-north east of Vishnupur also answers well. Bhattasali's ruined fort of Karasurgad, one mile from Kathasanga is too small for Minhāj's Katāsin.

ditches after hard fighting and put the Hindus to flight who left some elephants behind. As it was the time of mid-day meal, Tughral Tughān recalled his troops from the assault and ordered that nobody should vex the elephants which were evidently left in their place on the other side of the second ditch. The soldiers of the army of Islam were busy in preparing or eating their meals. A party of Orissa soldiers made a sortie from the direction of the fort to take away the elephants they had left behind in the morning; and simultaneously a small detachment of two hundred footmen and fifty *sawārs* stole their way from behind a cane-jungle and rushed upon the rear of the Muslim army. The panic spread to the whole army of Tughral Tughān Khan. At any rate the army of Orissa kept up a hot pursuit, and the Turks did not make a stand even in their own fort of Lakhnor, 70 miles north-west of Katāsin. It will be idle to suppose that the Muslim army was helpless before a handful of enemies or that the Turk had forgotten his trade. Tughral Tughān Khan was no doubt out-generalled by the King of Orissa who had drawn the enemy far away from their frontier and must have concealed more than one surprising party along the whole route of the enemy's advance. A greater disaster had not till then befallen the Muslims in any part of Hindustan. "The Muslims," says Minhāj "sustained an overthrow, and a great number of those holy warriors attained martyrdom."

The situation was critical at Lakhnawati. Tughān Khan after his return from Katāsin sent Sharf-ul-Mulk al-Ashari and Qazi Jalāluddin Kāshāni to the Imperial Court to implore military assistance. The mission was successful; Sultan Alauddin Mas'ud Shah issued orders to Malik Qārā-Qash Khan, governor of Kārā-Mānikpur, and also to Malik Tamar Khan of Oudh to unite their forces and march at once "for exterminating the infidels of Jājnagar." Meanwhile the Rāy of Jājnagar followed up his success by capturing Lakhnor and putting to the sword Fakhr-ul-Mulk Karimuddin Langhri, the fief-holder of Lakhnor, along with a large number of Muslims. The rule of the Turks was terminated in Rāḍh, and Varendra was invaded next year. On Tuesday, the 13th Shawwal 642 A.H. (14th March 1245) the army of Orissa consisting of a large number of *paiks* (infantry) and elephants actually arrived before the Muslim capital, and drove Tughral Tughān to seek shelter within the gates of Lakhnawati. The very next day messengers are said to have brought news to Lakhnawati that the army of Hindustan was near at hand;—perhaps a trick to hearten the people of the city. However, the army of Hindustan was really on its march through Bihar along the southern bank of the Ganges, and within a few days reached "the Hill of Lakhnawati" *i.e.* the Rājmahal hills; and the

Hindu army thus threatened on the flank withdrew from the neighbourhood of Lakhnawati. Instead of combining to retrieve the prestige of Muslim arms and exterminate the Hindus, the Muslims now fell out; Tughral Tughān Khan wished the army of Hindustan under Malik Tamar Khan of Oudh to march back as the Hindus had already retreated; but he shared the unhappy fate of a prince who calls to his aid a more powerful ally. Malik Tamar Khan-i-Qirān, bent on depriving Tughān Khan of Bengal, laid siege to Lakhnawati and daily skirmishes continued between the hostile forces. One morning the two Khans fought till mid-day, after which both the armies retired for their meals. Most of the soldiers of Tughān Khan had gone into the city and a few troopers who were left with him in the camp outside the city-gate had also alighted from their horses. Malik Tamar Khan stood ready for battle in his camp and was waiting for news from the spies whom he had set upon the movements of Tughral Tughān. He at once made a dash for camp of Tughān Khan, who absolutely unprepared for such an emergency, saved himself by flight within the city, on Tuesday the 5th of Zilhijjah, 642 (4th May 1245, a Thursday).

Minhāj-i-Sirāj negotiated a peace between the two Khans whereby Tughral Tughān was allowed to march out of the city unmolested with "his treasure, his elephants and followers," giving up Lakhnawati and Bihar to Malik Tamar Khan-i-Qirān. The auxiliary Amirs, Malik Qārā-Qash and Malik Tājuddin, and also the historian Minhāj-i-Sirāj with his family and dependents, accompanied the crest-fallen Tughral Tughān, who now bade his last farewell to Lakhnawati and reached the Imperial Court on Monday, the 14th Safar, 643 A.H. (11th July, 1245 A.D.). Sultan Alauddin Mas'ud was too weak to punish the treachery and disloyalty of the new usurper of Lakhnawati; Tughral Tughān Khan had to wait till another revolution at Delhi raised Prince Nāsiruddin Mahmud (the Younger) to the throne (Sunday, the 23rd Muharram, 644/10th June 1246). The new Sultan redressed the wrong done to Tughral Tughān by bestowing on him Malik Tamar's province of Oudh: Tughān proceeded from Delhi to make good his claim on Oudh and entered its territory only to die on the night of Friday, the last day of the month of Shawwal of that year (644 A.H./9th March 1247). Almost by a divine coincidence Malik Tamar Khan-i-Qirān after two years of usurped rule over a circumscribed territory in Bengal also breathed his last on the same night in the city of Lakhnawati. In spite of of his failure to capture Lakhnawati, the Turks could not for ten years dislodge King Narasiṁhadeva I from his conquests bounded on the north by the white waters of Ganges which had "assumed the

dark countenance of the Yamunā by the collyrium-stained tears of the Yavana women of Rāḍhā and Varendrī."[1]

On the death of Malik Tamar Khan-i-Qirān after two years of weak and uneventful rule in Lakhnawati, the governorship of Bengal and Bihar was granted by the imperial court to Malik Jalāluddin Mas'ud Jāni, son of Malik Alauddin Jāni. He ruled for about four years (from 645 A.H. to 649 A.H./*c.* May 1247 to March 1251) arrogating to himself the title of *Malik-ush-Sharq* and what was unusual by designating himself *Shāh*,—though he did not discard his allegiance to Sultan Nāsiruddin. The only relic of Mas'ud Jāni's viceroyalty is an inscription from a mosque at Gangārāmpur near Devkot.

III. Sultan Mughis-ud-din Yuzbak : His Conquests and Tragic End

Malik Ikhtyāruddin Yuzbak, governor of Oudh, succeeded Mas'ud Jāni in 650 A.H. The new governor was a habitual rebel, having already risen twice against Sultan Nāsiruddin, and been each time pardoned and promoted through the favour of Ulugh Khan Balban. "Rashness and imperiousness," says Minhāj-i-Sirāj, "were implanted in his nature and constitution"; but he was a man of undoubted ability as a soldier and proved a successful ruler too. After having consolidated his authority in Varendra he led an expedition to Rāḍhā in 651 A.H. (*c.* November-December, 1253) to retrieve the prestige of the Turkish arms. It proved a hard job, as a vigorous chief of Orissa, a son-in-law and feudatory (*Savantar*, Oriya *Sāntra*) of Rājā Narasimhadev I, had consolidated a powerful vassal kingdom with his capital at Madāran (*Umardan* of Minhāj) in the north-eastern corner of the modern Hooghly district, a few miles west of Chinsurah. During this campaign three battles were fought and in the last of them Malik Ikhtyāruddin Yuzbak suffered a defeat with heavy loss, though he "showed in comparison with Tughral Tughān greater courage and grit." He implored assistance from the Imperial Court, which was itself helpless on account of the temporary eclipse of the power of Ulugh Khan Balban and the ascendancy of the faction of 'Imāduddin Rayāni and Mas'ud Jāni, the latter having married scandalously Sultan Nāsiruddin's own mother, Malkā-i-Jahān. However, Malik Ikhtyāruddin Yuzbak re-

[1] For references to the successes of Narasiṁhadeva I see. N. Vasu. *Kenduapatina Copper-plates, JASB.* LXV. 1896; M. Chakravarti, *Eastern Gaṅga Kings of Orissa, JASB.* 1903, pp. 121 ff; R. D. Banerji, *History of Orissa,* I. 263 ff.

organised his own army and two years later (653 A.H./c. November-December, 1255) again invaded Rāḍhā. Grown wiser by his previous experience he avoided frontal attacks which gave an advantage to the army of Orissa with its numerous elephants. According to the notions of the age, an elephant was considered worth "five hundred horsemen" even by a military expert like Balban; because, unlike the ancient Romans who fought Pyrrhus, the Turks had not yet discovered the weak points of this mighty animal. With his superior cavalry Malik Ikhtyāruddin dealt swift and decisive blows by resorting to the nomad tactics of stratagem and surprise against the slow-moving Hindu infantry and won conspicuous success. By a well-planned attack he captured Madāran, the capital of Sāvantar, and everything within the city except the person of the Orissa chief fell into his hands. He next turned his arms to reducing the whole country of Rāḍhā, which was almost completed with the second conquest of Nadia. Malik Ikhtyāruddin Yuzbak now rebelled a third time against the Sultan of Delhi and commemorated his new conquests by a special issue of a beautiful silver coin from the Lakhnawati mint in the month of Ramzan 653 A.H. He was the first Shamsi Mamluk who openly assumed the title of Sultan, *Sultan Mughis al-duniya waal-din Abul Muzaffar Yuzbak al-Sultan.*

The state of things at the Delhi Court and another ministerial revolution which brought back Balban to power emboldened Sultan Mughisuddin to seize the masterless province of Oudh. Balban had driven out its rebellious governor Malik Mas'ud Jāni and harried the province as far as the frontiers of Tirhut during his campaign in the beginning of 654 A.H./February 1256. After the departure of the imperial army Sultan Mughisuddin attacked that province with impunity during the rainy season of that year with his army and fleet of war-boats (July-August, 1256). He entered triumphantly the city of Oudh and instituted there the reading of *khutbah* in his own name. He now assumed at Lakhnawati three canopies of State, red, black and white, perhaps as a token of his sovereignty over the three provinces Lakhnawati, Bihar and Oudh. It is said that the citizens of Lakhnawati, Hindu and Muslim, disapproved of this defiance of the imperial authority by their ruler. But Sultan Mughisuddin, confident of his own strength, thought of adding a fourth province, the country of Kāmrup, to his own kingdom. In the beginning of the year 655 A.H. (January 1257) the ministry of Balban at Delhi was in the grip of a serious struggle with a coalition of powerful nobles—Mas'ud Jāni, Kishlu Khan and Tājuddin Ārslān Khan. So Sultan Mughisuddin started with composure of mind on his fatal expedition for the conquest of Kāmrup at the beginning of the spring, 1257 (655 A.H.).

The land of Kāmrup was almost a *terra incognita* to the Turkish rulers of Lakhnawati, though the more vigorous among them are credited with successful forays on its border. The boundary between the Muslim territory of Lakhnawati and the country of Kāmrup was the river Karatoyā or the Beg-mati of Minhāj, (a river of the first order, "thrice as broad as the Ganges)," which flowed in front of the mythical city of Mardan or Bardhan, perhaps the old Paunḍravardhana, identified by some with Mahāsthān-garh. The trans-Karatoyā region had been in the process of a political and religious transformation during the second half of the thirteenth century. There was no centralised kingdom or kingdoms in Kāmrup at the time of Sultan Mughisuddin's invasion of it. The land was divided among *Bārā-bhumyās* of the Bodo, Koch, Mech tribes as far east as the Barā Nadi; and the country further east was under the rule of Sukhaphā (1228-68 A.D.) the founder of the Ahom dynasty of Assam. These Bārā-Bhumyās who ruled in modern Koch-Bihār, Goālpārā and Kāmrup, formed a sort of loose political confederacy under the authority of the most powerful among them. During this dark period of the history of Kāmrup appeared the legendary hero, Hājo the Koch, undoubtedly a historical personage after whose name the land of Kāmrup proper received the name of Koch-Hājo, in contra-distinction to Koch-Bihār, in later Muslim histories. Hājo is remembered "to have been a person of great vigour, and reduced under his government the whole of this (Rangpur) district except Ghorāghāt, together with most of that portion of Assam, which is included in the government of Gohāti or Kāmrup."[1] Sultan Mughisuddin crossed the river, perhaps somewhere near Ghorāghāt in the Rangpur district and marched through the modern Goālpārā district along the northern bank of the Brahmaputra river. "The Rāi of Kāmrup" did not offer any fight, and when the Muslim army reached the capital of the Rāi it was also evacuated. Sultan Mughisuddin acquired rich booty in that virgin field of loot previously unvisited by any raider. It is said that twelve hundred (vesselfuls ?) of treasure buried near that city by Shah Garshāsp of Irān on his way from China through Kāmrup to Hindustan—fell with their seals intact into the hands of the army of Islam ! The country was so rich and flourishing that Sultan Mughisuddin thought of completing its conquest and annexation and refused offers of yearly tribute from the Rāi. He turned the capital of the Rāi into an abode of Islam and decided to halt there during the rains. It was already the time of the spring harvest; but the Sultan unacquainted with

[1] Martin, *Eastern India*, III. 418. Hājo's name is perpetuated by a *pargana* Hājo in the Kāmrup district.

the conditions of the country neglected to store up grain and fodder for his army. He was further encouraged to stop there by the show of submission of the Hindus who had been allowed by the Rāi to do so and return home. Whatever surplus stock of food-stuff there was in the city and the neighbouring country was purchased by merchants moving in disguise and exported to distant places without rousing the suspicion of the Turks. The Rājā of Kāmrup had concealed himself with his army in the jungle of the submontane tract, dammed up the hill streams for the emergency flooding of the country below in case the Muslim army would pursue him to his retreat, and was waiting confidently for the outburst of the monsoons and famine in the enemy's camp. As soon as the rains began (*c.* April-May, 1257) the first Muslim invading army found itself in the same plight as that experienced in later times by the army of Mīr Jumlā in Assam so graphically described by the historian Shihābuddin Tālish. The Hindus according to the preconcerted plan rose in arms on all sides, cut off supplies to the city, and seized the plains and water-ways. The very earth became like water and mud like water outside, and within the city death by starvation stared the besieged Turks in the face. The Sultan caught hold of a guide who undertook to conduct his army by a shorter route through the submontane tract, evidently by way of the Dooars *via* Koch-Bihār, in the direction of Devkot. When the Sultan had traversed several stages and entered the defiles and jungles of the submontane tract (*koh-pāyān*), he was in a narrow place assailed by the Hindus on all sides and a panic seized the Turks. The Sultan mounted on an elephant fought bravely till he was mortally wounded by an arrow. The entire Turkish army surrendered and the Sultan with all his children, family and dependents became captives in the hand of the Rājā of Kāmrup. The Sultan in his last gasp signified his wish to see his son, and putting his face on the face of his son he breathed his last. Though the Court historian has not a kind word to say for our brave Sultan Mughisuddin Yuzbak, the Muslim power of Lakhnawati owed much to the vigour and earnest efforts of Yuzbak, who annexed permanently the whole of Rāḍh as far as the modern northern boundary of the districts of Midnapur and Bankurā. This proved in the subsequent period the base of operations of Muslim arms against the decaying Sena kingdom of Eastern and South Bengal. His rashness and ambition cost Lakhnawati a large and gallant army; the Kāmrup disaster broke the spell of the invincibility of Turkish arms with the Mongoloid tribes of Koch and Mech, and started them on a new career of political greatness that affected the history of Medieval Bengal very deeply for the next three centuries.

IV. LAST MAMLUK RULERS OF BENGAL, 1257-1272

After the tragic end of Sultan Mughisuddin Yuzbak in Kāmrup (c. July 1257), Lakhnawati reverted to her allegiance to Sultan Nāsiruddin. One Yuzbak succeeded another before the year 655 A.H. (=1257) expired. Very little is known about the previous career of the new ruler of Lakhnawati, Malik 'Izzuddin Balban-i-Yuzbaki, except that he was also a Shamsi Malik who married a daughter of the notorious Mas'ud Jāni and held the post of *nāib-Amir-i-Majlis* at Court in Shawwal 652 A.H. (December 1254) during the ascendancy of the Rayāni faction. Only a fellow tribesman, and not related in any other way to the deceased Sultan Mughisuddin, he seized the vacant *masnad* without any commission or perhaps even knowledge of the pious Sultan of Delhi. He ruled for about two years in virtual independence, retaining his own name, Yuzbak, along with that of his nominal sovereign Nāsiruddin on the coins of the Lakhnawati mint. It was only in the last year of his career that he sent as *peshkash* to Delhi two elephants and other valuables, and received a robe of investiture and formal recognition as the governor of the province (Jamada II. 657/June 1259). About six months before in Muharrah 657 Malik Mas'ud Jāni had been designated governor of Bengal for a second time in supersession evidently of Malik 'Izzuddin Yuzbak. But Yuzbak's elephants turned the scale and through the exertion of Ulugh Khan Balban, a sworn enemy of Mas'ud Jāni, this appointment was cancelled and Yuzbak confirmed in the government of that province. The only event of Malik 'Izzuddin's rule was an invasion of "Bang" in 657 A.H., leaving his capital denuded of troops with the result that he too shared the fate of Sultan Ghiyāsuddin 'Iwaz Khilji who had committed the same blunder twenty-three years before.

Malik Tājuddin Ārslān Khan, Sanjar-i-Chasht, the next ruler of Lakhnawati, was the son of one of the Amirs of Khwārizm (Khiva), sold into slavery in early childhood as perhaps a prisoner of war, and he had changed several hands before he was purchased by Sultan Shamsuddin Iltutmish. He served that Sultan as *Jāmah-dār* (Keeper of the Wardrobe) and was united in marriage by his loving master with a daughter of Bahāuddin Tughral of Bayānā, a slave of Sultan Shihābuddin Ghori. He was, says Minhāj-i-Siraj, "an impetuous and warlike man and had attained the acme of capacity and intrepidity," a veritable *ārslān* or lion in war, as he proved himself on many a field. But Malik Tājuddin Ārslān Khan was of a piece with Malik Mas'ud Jāni in rebelliousness and restless ambition, and they kept the eastern provinces of Kārā, Qanauj and Oudh in turmoil for several years. After his submission he

secured through the patronage of Ulugh Khan Balban the governorship of Kārā in the beginning of the year 657 A.H. But Kārā was too small for his ambition and he aspired to an independent sovereignty in far-off Lakhnawati. He kept himself exceptionally well-informed of the affairs in Bengal. As soon as he learnt that Malik 'Izzuddin Balban-i-Yuzbaki had gone to Bang leaving Lakhnawati unprotected, he too started on a campaign giving out that his objective was Kālanjar. But he took his army by an unfrequented route keeping everybody in the dark about his design till they reached too close to the frontier of Bengal. Malik Tājuddin appeared with his army before the gates of Lakhnawati which, however, refused to submit without a fight. What was unusual for the inhabitants of that city, they held out against the invader for three days and fought for the cause of their absent governor. Tājuddin Ārslān Khan carried the city by assault and gave it up for three days to his soldiery for committing every imaginable excess, sparing not even the respectable Muslim citizens. Malik 'Izzuddin Yuzbak returned from Bang too late, fought a battle with Tājuddin Ārslān, and either died in battle or was taken a captive and killed[1] afterwards (c. December, 1259 A.D.)

The thread of written chronicle concerning the affairs of Bengal breaks at this point, because the court-historian Minhāj-i-Sirāj stops here (1260 A.D.) and the next historian Ziāuddin Bārani was only learning his alphabet twenty-five years later in the reign of Sultan Kaiqubād. No coin also throws light on the period of Tājuddin Ārslān Khan's rule in Bengal and his relations with the Delhi Court. The Bārahdāri inscription[2] of Bihar warrants us in surmising correctly that Tājuddin Ārslān Khan held independent sway over Bihar and Lakhnawati under the title of Sultan, that he died in the night of Sunday, 18th Jamada I, 663 A.H. (8th March 1265) and that he was succeeded by his son Tātār Khan, in whose time a tomb was built over the remains of this Sultan two years

[1] The *text* of *Nasiri* has, "Arslan Khan became a captive, was martyred." Raverty here has scored a point against Blochmann, and I agree fully with Raverty in his remark that the *official text* (Bib. Ind.) *here kills the wrong man.* (Text. 268; Trans. 770, f. 9).

[2] Blochmann's reading of this inscription (*JASB.* 1873, p. 247) is superseded by that of Professor Yazdani's fuller version (*Epigraphia Indo-Moslemica,* 1913-14, p. 24). Prof. Yazdani does not definitely identify the *Sultan Shah* of this inscription with Tātār Khan's father. We have good reasons to hold that the person meant was certainly Tātār Khan s father. We also hold that the absence of the name of Balban in this inscription gives the lie to the statement of *Riyaz* that Tātār Khan acknowledged allegiance to Balban in the first year of that Sultan's accession (664 A.H.)

after his death (665 A.H.). Prince Tātār Khan was a very capable ruler, renowned "for his bravery, liberality, heroism and honesty" (*Riyaz*, Trans. 78). He did not acknowledge allegiance to the Sultan of Delhi, Nāsiruddin, who died in 664 A.H. (1266 A.D.). That year he sent his envoys to Delhi with congratulatory presents to Sultan Ghiyāsuddin Balban; which among other things included 63 elephants. This diplomatic mission[1] from Bengal was accorded at Delhi a royal reception worthly of embassies from Irān or Turān. The envoys of Tātār Khan were loaded with gifts of high value, and given leave of departure.

Muhammad Tātār Khan died in independence, perhaps two years after Balban's accession, and his successor, Sher Khan, a member of the family of Tājuddin Ārslān Khan and not a governor sent from Delhi, restored the name of Balban on the coinage of Lakhnawati in 667 A.H.[2] or a year earlier. It is not definitely known how long Sher Khan ruled in Bengal, except that after Sher Khan's death Sultan Balban appointed Āmin Khan, a Delhi noble, as governor of Bengal with Tughral Khan as its Deputy-Governor. Sher Khan's rule was perhaps of no longer duration than four years (*c.* 666-670 A.H.=1268-1272.) Under the house of Tājuddin Ārslān Khan the Muslim power seems to have been extended to some portions of Eastern Bengal. The Sena kingdom of Eastern Bengal suffered aggressions on both banks of the river Padmā, as repeated invasions of Bang from the time of Ghiyāsuddin 'Iwaz down to that of 'Izzuddin Balban Yuzbaki are on record. The power of the Senas was on the verge of extinction in the second half of the thirteenth century on account of Muslim attacks from the west, Magh raids by water from the south, and the rise of Danujamādhava Daśarathadeva in Chandradvīpa or the modern Backergunj district as an independent power. The Muslim possessions in Bengal included at least some portion of East Bengal (*Bangalah*), and it was perhaps for this reason that Balban for the first time associated a Deputy-Governor with the Governor of Lakhnawati.

1 For the reception of Tātār Khan's envoys cf. *Tarikh-i-Firuzshahi*, Text, 53; *Tabaqat-i-Akbari* (Text. Newalkishore Press, 40); *Riyaz*, Trans. 78.

2 The earliest extant coin of the Lakhnawati mint bearing the name of Balban is dated 667 or 669 A.H. (Wright, *Cat. Ind. Museum*, II. 34).

CHAPTER III.

BENGAL UNDER THE HOUSE OF BALBAN

1. Sultan Mughisuddin Tughral (c. 667-680 A.H.=1268-'81 A.D.)

Tughral was the last and the greatest of the successful Mamluks who had risen from the position of mere house-hold slaves to the independent sovereignty of Bengal in the time of Sultan Ghiyāsuddin Balban. He possessed all the characteristic virtues of a Turk, indomitable will, reckless, bravery, resourcefulness and boundless ambition. When Sher Khan, the successor of Tātār Khan, died in Bengal Tughral was appointed a deputy (*nāib*) of Amin Khan to whom the Sultan had granted the province of Bengal perhaps in addition to Amin's own province of Oudh (cir, 667 A.H.). This was, if we are to believe the *Tārikh-i-Mubārakshāhi,* the only instance of the appointment of a Deputy-governor to Bengal by the Sultan of Delhi. Tughral at the time of his appointment was an untried brave, and he had not filled any high office at Court or in the imperial household. So it was not likely that Tughral was appointed straightway, as Barani says, the sole governor of Lakhnawati which had for about a decade enjoyed independent rule under the dynasty of Tajuddin Arslan Khan. Besides, Balban could not wholly ignore the superior claims of the governor of Oudh to succeed to the governorship of Lakhnawati, established by an almost uninterrupted usage. A cautious statesman as Balban was, he perhaps resorted to this new device to put a brake on the ambition of the governor of Bengal, a class always prone to rebellion. However, Lakhnawati again became a province of the Delhi Empire in or about 667 A.H., as the date of the earliest extent coin of Balban from the Lakhnawati mint shows. Bihar* was separated from Bengal and placed under an imperial officer, and it remained loyal to Delhi even when Bengal was afterwards lost to the Empire.

Amin Khan's name is retained in the list of governors of Bengal rather for the sake of courtesy than for any actual achievement of his, of which history knows none; whereas his more energetic deputy, enjoying the full confidence of the Sultan, had been throughout the *de facto* ruler of this province. Behind the veil of the half-informed historian Barani's vague references to Tughral's "*several*

* *Vide* Monghyr Inscription of Balban dated 677 A.H. (Bengal, List, p. 414, quoted by Dr. J. Horovitz in *Epigraphia Indo-Moslemica,* 1909-10; p. 113).

enterprises", and "the *Qila-i-Tughral*" in the neighbourhood of Sonārgāon, lies concealed an interesting phase of the expansion of Muslim power to the modern Faridpur and Dacca districts. Tughral also looms large in the popular tradition of the neighbouring district of Tippera. It is said that Ratna-Fa, the founder of the present ruling dynasty of Tippera, sought the assistance of Tughral in ousting his elder brother Raja Fa from the throne. Thereupon Tughral invaded the country, placed Ratna-Fa on the throne, and gave him the title of Mānik in return for the Rajah's present of a precious jewel. This tradition read along with the historical fact of the enmity of Danuj Rai, the *Rāi* of Sonārgāon, and Tughral's impregnable fortress of Narkila (the same as "*the Fort of Tughral*" of Barani, identified with the important Feringi stronghold of Loricol, about 25 miles due south of Dacca, and about 10 miles south-west of Rajabari)—gives us some idea of the formidable power built up by Tughral during the early years of his career in Bengal. It is beyond doubt that Tughral drove a wedge into the heart of the shrinking Hindu kingdom of East Bengal by permanently annexing the riverian tract on both banks of the Padmā as far as *Loricol*, where he kept his treasure, family and the State prisoners. This extension became known since the time of Barani as '*Arsah-i-Bangāla*'*, a portion of the bigger geographical unit, *Diyār-i-Bangāla* which had till then remained independent.

It was not unlikely that Tughral seized the opportunity of establishing a friendly power in Tippera, and thereby tightened his grip on the Rāi of Sonārgāon, who must have now found himself between two mill-stones. Though we have no positive evidence to prove that Tughral occupied Sonārgāon, Balban according to Barani looked upon Sonārgāon as a distinct government, conjoined with that of Lakhnawati after the fall of Tughral, and it is a known fact that Balban did not subjugate any Hindu territory during his Bengal campaign. It seems, therefore, that there is considerable truth in the tradition recorded by the Ghataks of Idilpur that Chandradvip or the modern Barisal district became the seat of an independent Hindu kingdom under one Danuj Rāi Kāyastha who was, we have strong reasons to believe, the same person as Danuj Rāi, *the Rāi of Sonārgāon* of the Muslim historians. The founder of the Chandradvip dynasty, Sri Dasarath Danuja *Mādhav*, perhaps had before Tughral's time, seized some portions of the heritage of

* Perhaps identical with "Bang" of the coins of Ruknuddin Kaikaus (*vide* JASB. N. S. XVIII. 410). Balban later on referred to his conquest of '*Arsah-i-Bangāla*' from the rebellious Tughral (Barani. Text. 93), and advised Bughra Khan to exert himself in the conquest of *Diyār-i-Bangāla*.

the Senas in the neighbourhood of Sonārgāon, and arrogated to himself the titles of the fallen dynasty also. Tughral's aggressions in East Bengal, therefore, must have been at the expense of this Hindu Rajah, who later on allied himself with Balban in bringing about the fall of Tughral and his fortress of Narkila (*Loricol*). However, Tughral's aggressions were not confined to East Bengal, he also perhaps extended the boundary of the Muslim dominion in the Radh tract, and carried raids into the territory of Jājnagar, a vague geographical expression, the northern boundary of which extended from Chota Nagpur to the Delta of the Bhāgirathi, including roughly portions of the Birbhum, Bankura, Burdwan districts and the western half of the Hughly district. These raids into the Jājnagar country brought to Tughral immense booty in treasure and elephants, and it is said that Tughral's first act of rebellion was his refusal to send the customary royal share of a fifth of the spoils to Delhi.

Sultan Ghiyāsuddin Balban could not for some years keep a vigilant eye on the affairs of Bengal owing to his preoccupation with Mongol invasions in the Punjab. He left Delhi for Lahore in the sixth year of his reign and had to stay there for more than two years. There the Sultan had a serious attack of illness, and he could not appear in public for several days, and rumour magnified his illness into actual death by the time it reached Bengal. Tughral naturally considered himself absolved from allegiance to Delhi, and at once hostilities began between him and Amin Khan, who was defeated in a battle outside Lakhnawati (*c.* 674 A.H.). After his return to Delhi, the Sultan tried diplomatic connivance at all that had happened in Bengal during his illness; and wrote a reassuring mandate to Tughral asking the latter to celebrate the occasion of the Sultan's recovery from illness in a befitting manner.* But Tughral had crossed the Rubicon, and he was too self-willed to retreat. He replied to the Sultan's *formān* by mobilising his army and advancing into Bihar. He assumed the title of Sultan Mughisuddin, and issued coins and read the *khutba* in his own name. His Court at Lakhnawati rivalled that of Delhi in power and magnificence, and he was more popular with his people, and much better served by them than Sultan Balban, who was more feared than loved by his subjects. Barani does Tughral bare justice in saying: "He was profuse in his liberality; so the people of the city (of *Delhi*), who had been there, and also the inhabitants of that place (Lakhnawati) became very friendly to him. The troops

* *Tārikh-i-Mubārakchāhi.* Text. 30-31.

and citizens having shaken off all of the Balbani chastisement, joined Tughral heart and soul."* We have it on the authority of Barani that Tughral sent largesses even to Delhi, and in Bengal he is said to have made a gift of *five maunds* of gold (about eighteen seers in Persian weight) for the maintenance of an establishment of Darwishes in Bengal, whose leader was afterwards executed by Balban. Tughral was, as subsequent events show. popular with all classes of his people, Hindu and Muslim alike, and this was not due to his liberality alone but to his other kingly virtues as well. His people followed his fortune through thick and thin, and none voluntarily betrayed him. In short Balban was now at war not with an individual rebel but with a whole province, and this accounts for the repeated failures of the imperial armies against Bengal, and the Sultan's own difficulties in subduing Tughral.

Sultan Balban lost his sleep and appetite—as Barani says—when the news of Tughral's assumption of sovereignty in Bengal reached him. There was at that time no large standing army of the Delhi Sultans, but only feudal and provincial levies to meet the emergency of war. The first expedition against Tughral started from Oudh, perhaps not earlier than January, 1278 A.D. (*cir*. middle of 676 A.H.), under Malik Turmati governor of Oudh and Commander-in-Chief of the expedition, swelled by the contingents of Tamar Khan Shamsi and Malik Tajuddin, son of Malik Katlagh Khan Shamsi. After crossing the river Sarju, the imperialists advanced by way of Tirhut till their progress was arrested by the Bengal army somewhere between Tirhut and Lakhnawati. Tughral's army though perhaps weak in cavalry was numerically superior to the imperialists, and it was too formidable to be attacked on account of a large number of elephants and hosts of *paiks* (Hindu foot soldiers). The two armies encamped facing each other for a pretty long time ; and in the meanwhile Tughral spent money lavishly in secretly winning over many officers in the enemy camp. At last when the two armies joined battle, the Hindustanis (perhaps the troops of the two Shamsi nobles) kept themselves on one side ; and a disastrous defeat befell Malik Turmati. During their flight the imperialists were helplessly plundered by the Hindus, and a large number of them, in fear of the terrible punishment of the Sultan that awaited them at home, preferred to accompany Tughral to Lakhnawati. *Fatuh-us-Salatin* says that Sultan Balban had poor Turmati treacherously seized by his emissaries at the time of hunting and gibbetted him on the gate-way of the city of Oudh [T. 161].

"Another army was sent next year" (cir. 677 A.D.), says Barani,

* *Tārikh-i-Firuzshāhi*, Barani ; text, 83.

"under a new Commander", who too was defeated by Tughral. *Tārikh-i-Mubārakshāhi* gives the name of the general as Malik Shihabuddin, Governor of Oudh, whereas *Fatuh-us-Salātin* calls him Bahadur, the most esteemed (*mahataram*) slave of the Sultan, who was ordered to march from Delhi. The latter book gives a glowing description of the battle between him and Tughral. Bahadur took the same road to Lakhnawati by way Tirhut, and again Tughral gave him battle on his frontier. Bahadur had promised to the Sultan to bring Tughral alive, and to fulfil it he fought with desperate valour. But a division of the imperial army broke and fled during the critical hour of fight; and Bahadur too retired discomfitted. It is said that the Sultan thought of putting this vanquished general too to death; but he was dissuaded from his fierce resolve by his courtiers. There remained now no other alternative for the Sultan but to take the field against the rebel in person.

Barani tells us without giving any dates that the Bengal campaigns necessitated the Sultan's absence from Delhi for three years. We have an indirect archaeological evidence that the Sultan and his Amirs must have returned to the capital not later than the beginning of the year 681 A.H.* (cir. June, 1282 A.H.). Of these three years one was occupied fully with Balban's vast preparations, and the other two in actual campaigns in Bengal. Filled with shame and anger, and his life embittered by the repeated failure of his armies, the Sultan prepared himself as it were for his journey's end. He kept his design carefully concealed, and though his objective was Lakhnawati, he left Delhi under the pretence of a hunting excursion and marched northward for Samāna and Sanām. His eldest son, who held the fief of Multan, was appointed to the supreme command in the case of Mongol invasions, and all the fief-holders north of the Delhi province were to serve under the Prince (October-November, 1279: 678 A.H.). He placed the whole administration of the imperial capital under the charge of Malik-ul-Umara, the Kotwal of Delhi, whom the Sultan appointed his *naib*; Bughra Khan, the youngest son of the Sultan was relieved of his charge of Samāna and Sanām and directed to bring up the rear of the expeditionary force. He then crossed into the Doab (begin-

* Barani. Text. "*ba'd seh sal*" 107; Rivaz. Text. 84.

At Garh-Mukteswar (U.P.), a mosque was built during the *governorship of Bekturs as-Sultani* in the middle of *Rabi'l 682 A.H.* *This* Bek-turs was undoubtedly Malik Bek-turs the Commander of the vanguard of Balban's army which surprised Tughral on the borders of Jajnagar. So this man must have been in charge of Garh-Mukteswar after his return from Bengal, and at least a year before the completion of the mosque (*Vide Epigraphia Indo-Moslemica*, 1913-14;29).

ning of January, 1280), and having collected "all the forces of the neighbourhood" along his route, he entered Oudh (March, 1280), which was made the rendezvous of the expeditionary army and the fleet. The Sultan had already ordered the construction of a fleet of boats on the Jamuna and the Ganges; and swelled into an immense size by fresh requisitions during its passage down the Ganges, this flotilla now stood ready to co-operate with the land forces. The Sultan ordered a general levy in Oudh, and two lakhs of men including, cavalry, infantry, *paiks* (Hindu footmen), *Danaks*; *Kāhārs*, *Kiwāni* (?), *Khud-āspah* (irregulars with their own horses), Tir-zan (archers), Ghulāms, *Chākars* (servants), *Saudāgars* (merchants) and *Bāzāris* (dealers in the camp bazar)—were enlisted (*dar qalam amad*).* To these two lakhs must be added about a lakh more perhaps which had already assembled during the Sultan's march from Samana to Oudh. Such a large army never assembled either before or after, under the banner of any Muslim emperor of Delhi except for Sultan Muhammad Tughlaq's mad project of the conquest of Khorasan. His preparations were on a scale sufficient to crush the whole province of Bengal under the sheer weight of numbers.

Meanwhile, Tughral had advanced with his fleet of war-boats to the mouth of the river Sarju, more with a view to watching the movements of the imperiailists than to offering fight. In spite of the lateness of the season Sultan Balban started from Oudh with the main army, and Bughra Khan was left behind to bring up the rear. When the Sultan crossed the Sarju undisputed, Tughral sailed away for Lakhnawati. In the meantime the rains began (June, 1280); but the Sultan pushed forward, callous to the loss and sufferings of his troops. The fleet of boats (*bajrāhā*) was to keep in touch with the land forces, which, however, could advance very slowly on account of mud and showers, through the low-lying country. Tughral decided on the strategy of avoiding any pitched battle with the superior army of the Sultan, or presenting to the enemy any decisive point of attack. As he could not hope to defend Lakhnawati, he evacuated it completely, and the more respectable section of its civil population also accompanied him to escape the barbarous ferocity of the Sultan. Tughral, says Barani, "took the road to Jajnagar, and halted at a dry place, one day's journey from Lakhnawati," which was apparently on the other side of the Ganges, and somewhere near about the high embanked road of 'Iwaz connecting Lakhnawati and Lakhnor (Nagar) in the Birbhum district. When Balban arrived within thirty or forty *kos* of Lakhnawati Tughral resumed

* *TF.* Barani, 86.

his retreat in the direction of Jajnagar (Orissa and *not* Tipperah). Balban did not reach Lakhnawati perhaps before the middle of August 1280 A.D., and he halted there for sometime for "arming and reorganising his forces" perhaps till the end of the rains (middle of September, 1280). He reserved the punishment of the city to a future occasion, and appointed Barani's maternal grandfather, Sipah Salar Hishamuddin, the *Sahana* (Commandant) of Lakhnawati with directions to send on to the Sultan's camp three or four times a week full particulars of the news that might be arriving from Delhi;—another proof of the Sultan's grim resolve not to return to Lakhnawati whatsoever might happen until he had finished the affair of Tughral.

Sultan Ghiyasuddin Balban waged *two* campaigns against Tughral; one was after the rainy season of 1280 A.D., and the other after that of 1281 A.D. His army passed the rainy season of 1281 at a place far away from Lakhnawati, perhaps in the vicinity of Sonargaon, and at a short distance from the *Qila-i-Tughral* (Narkila or Loricol of Rennell). When Balban and Rai Danuj concerted a plan of joint action against Tughral, Tughral gave both of them the slip again, taking the road to Jajnagar (where he at this time really meant to take shelter). Tughral's first retreat in the direction of Jajnagar (September, 1279) had been a mere bluff to divert Balban's attention from the fort of Narkila, where he had kept his own family and those of his followers, as well as the accummulated treasure of years. From Sonargaon Balban made a forced "march of seventy or eighty *kos* and arrived on the frontiers of Jajnagar"—a statement of Barani that has given rise to a keen controversy among modern writers regarding the identification of Jajnagar with modern Tipperah, and some of them make Tughral wander about in the jungles of Madhupur! We must remember that the historian Ziauddin Barani was a mere boy when he heard the story of Balban's Bengal campaigns from his maternal grandfather, a person having no first-hand knowledge of events except what happened at Lakhnawati. And Barani was an old man of failing memory when he sat down to write his history, and complete it about eighty years after the event (in 758 A.H.). Though he has jumbled together events of two different campaigns, he has left enough clear hints to us to reconstruct with tolerable certainty the story of Balban's campaigns in Bengal.

Barani says, "The Sultan many times declared in public to his troops 'I have put half the empire of Delhi at stake for the pursuit of Tughral; if he would sit down on the sea (*dar dariya khwahid nashast*), I will pursue him; and so long as I do not pour forth his blood and that of his associates, I shall not turn towards Delhi,

or even utter the name of Delhi.' The people of the army, who understood the temper of the Sultan, and knew well the seriousness of his resolution despaired of* ever returning; and many of the people sent from the camp to their homes their last testaments. The people of the city of Delhi and those of the camp became afflicted and vexed on account of the separation of friends from one another; and from both sides passed letters of separation (last farewell ?) through the hands of corn-dealers and messengers."

This implacable resolve of the Sultan, and his apprehension of Tughral's escaping by water clearly indicate the state of the Sultan's mind after the failure of his first campaign and also perhaps its being inflamed by the news of Tughral's presence at Narkila from which the rebel could sail down to the limitless sea. This despair of his troops could have had no meaning when they first started from Lakhnawati in pursuit of Tughral in the direction of Jajnagar; and their separation from their friends left behind in the city of Lakhnawati suggests the picture of Balban's camp during an idle season, and far away from Lakhnawati. It was from this camp that after full twelve months (*c.* September, 1280 A.D.), "the Sultan marched with all speed, and in a few days arrived 'on the frontiers of Sonargaon'" (not *at* Sonargaon).

Though the Muslim historians would have us believe that it was the Rai Danuj of Sonargaon who sought the interview, circumstantial evidence makes it clear that it was the Sultan who sought it, he having greater need of the Rai's help than the Rai had of the Sultan's favour. The Sultan had to yield to the Rai's insistence on a point of honour; *viz.*, that at the interview the Sultan should receive the Rai standing up from his throne. One of the Amirs of the Court, Malik Bar-bak Bekturs suggested an ingenious compromise not without an element of honour. However, when Rai Danuj entered the Sultan's presnence, the Sultan rose up and let loose a hawk (*Shikrah*) upon a bird, and thus complied with the condition of the Rajah; whereas those who were not in the know of the trick took it to be doing no honour to an infidel but an accidental standup for hawking! The Rai entered into an agreement (*'ahad-nāmah*) with the Sultan to the effect that "the Rai would be answerable for Tughral if he would take up his position on water or land, or fly by way of water or conceal himself in the water." On the whole it appears that Rai Danuj undertook to watch the Brahmaputra and the Padma lower down Narkila, and also other riverways and

* Here the printed text (p. 88) has "*nau umed*" (fresh hope;) which is evidently a slip; I take the reading in Elliot & Dowson, III. 117.

islands while the Sultan's army would march upon the stronghold of Tughral from the land-side. But everything ended in smoke on account of the vigilance of Tughral. Having found out that his retreat eastward or southward was cut off by the enmity of the Rai, Tughral apparently evacuated Narkila before his enemies had any suspicion of his movement. Barani says that the Sultan covered seventy *kos* by successive marches and arrived on the frontiers of Jaj-nagar (from the neighbourhood of Sonargaon). This inaccuracy of distance in Barani's history has proved embarrassing to historians,* who could not decide in which way the Sultan marched. However, this time Tughral really took the road to Jajnagar with his whole army, treasure, harem, and maid-servants. It is vain to speculate on the route of Tughral's retreat in the absence of any definite information. Balban detached a division of his army, seven to eight thousand strong, under Malik Bekturs, who was instructed to march in advance to a distance of ten or twelve *kos* from the main army, and send out small parties of scouts in all directions to secure intelligence. In this manner the imperial army continued its march in the direction of the Jajnagar territory. One day a party of Malik Bekturs's scouts who had gone to a distance of ten or twelve *kos* fell in with some merchants returning to their villages. Malik Sher-āndāz, the commander of the scouts, seized these persons on the suspicion that they were possibly returning from the camp of Tughral, and cut off the heads of two of them straightway. This act terrified the rest so much that they gave out the whereabouts of Tughral's army which was encamped at a distance of half a *kos* on the bank of a river. Malik Sher-andaz and his desperadoes rode cautiously forward and found Tughral's men drinking wine and singing; the elephants browsing on the branches of trees and the horses and cattle out grazing. They recklessly made a rush at the camp with drawn swords shouting

* Blochmann remarks that references to Jaj-nagar in the *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri* and Barani's *Tarikh-i-Firuzshahi* make us believe that either there were *two* Jaj-nagars, one in Orissa and the other in Tippera "*or* to assume that there was in reality *one* Jajnagar bordering on south-western Bengal. and that Barani in the above passage wrote Sonargaon for Satgaon, which would remove all difficulties." (JASB. 1873, Pt. I, 239). Banerjee satisfactorily disposed of this imaginary Jajnagar beyond the Brahmaputra, *Bangalar-Itihas*, II, 69-71). We do not think Barani committed any mistake of Sonargaon *for* Satgaon. Details in Barani clearly show that Balban after having marched for 70 *kos* was still at a considerable distance from the boundaries of Jajnagar, a general name for the whole of the tract, south of the then known Muslim dominion in Bengal; and Satgaon became a part of the Muslim territory about twenty years after.

for Tughral. The surprise was complete; Tughral and his companions thought that the whole army of the Sultan was upon them. Tughral attempted to swim across the river in front of his camp; but one man wounded him with an arrow and another cut off his head.

Thus Fate dealt her cruellest blow to Sultan Mughisuddin Tughral, whose achievements as a soldier and ruler posterity must admire. Sultan Balban returned with a huge amount of booty and a large number of prisoners, and entered Lakhnawati in triumph. The great bazar of Lakhnawati, more than a *kos* in length, was turned into an avenue of gallows from which were hanged "the sons, sons-in-law, *kārdārs* (ministers), *shughal-dārs* (high officials), favourite *ghulāms* (Mamluks), *Sar-lashkars* (army officers), *Jāndārs* (Body-guards), *Silāhdārs* (Armour-bearers), and famous *Paiks* of Tughral." Those prisoners of war who belonged to Delhi and its neighbourhood were sorted out to receive a similar punishment at Delhi, for reading a lesson to their near and dear ones. Balban's ferocious barbarity disgusted even his own followers, who thought that the days of the Sultan were drawing to an end.

The Sultan stayed for some time at Lakhnawati to re-organise the administration of the country, which he made over as an appanage to his youngest son. Bughra Khan, granting him the privileges of using the umbrella, *dur-bash* and other insignia of royalty. One day in a private meeting he administered an oath to Bughra Khan that he should hereafter exert himself in conquering *diyār-i-Bangāla,* and establishing his own authority therein firmly.. that he should not drink wine or idle away his time in childish amusements. "Remember, my son," continued the Sultan, "what amount of blood I have drunk in subduing *iqlim-i-Lakhnawati* and *'Arsah-i-Bangāla,* and for the sake of the durability of (the government of) this country. I have acted like a Pharaoh and hanged people from gallows.....But I know as soon as I shall travel away five or six stages from Lakhnawati in the direction of Delhi, you will plunge yourself in voluptuous pleasures and merriment."

The imperial entourage left Lakhnawati probably in April, 1282, proceeded through Oudh and Badayun, and reached Delhi after an absence of three years. Within four years the Sultan realised to his utter mortification that his own son, Bughrā Khan, was not a whit less ungrateful than the rebellious Tughral. and that he had laboured in vain to subject Bengal to the imperial sway of Delhi.

II. General features of the History of the House of Balban in Bengal (1286 to 1328 A.D.)

Perhaps the most notable feature of this period of the history of Bengal is the absence of any contemporary written chronicle. The only materials available to the historian are indistinct and worn out coin-legends and a few inscriptions of some of the rulers of the House of Balban. Numismatists wage war over the reading of dates and names on these old coins.

The history of the Muslim principality of Lakhnawati emerges at the close of this period as the history of Bengal proper with its well-defined divisions, Lakhnawati, Satgaon, Sonargaon and Chatgaon (Chittagong). It also becomes clear that Sonargaon, the capital of *Bang* or East Bengal, became at this time invariably the stepping stone to the throne of Lakhnawati; and the eastern capital outshone in power, wealth and grandeur the historic capital of Lakhnawati. "The period was," says Mr. Stapleton, "one of active expansion of Musalman dominion in Bengal, and the adjacent countries."[1] This expansion was due to several causes. After the overthrow of the ascendancy of the Mamluk Turks by the Khiljis (accession of Sultan Jalaluddin Khilji; Muharram 689 A.H.; *Mubarakshahi;* Text 59), the genuine Turks who hated the Khiljis as upstart plebeians migrated perhaps in large numbers to far off Bengal whose rulers took pride in calling themselves "Rulers of Turks and Persians." Secondly, Bengal enjoyed a fairly long respite from the aggressive Khilji and Tughlaq imperialism which latter overwhelmed Bengal only for a time in the first quarter of the fourteenth century. Therefore the rulers of the House of Balban in Bengal, finding no scope for warlike enterprises westward, concentrated their energy and resources in subduing the small Hindu principalities which till then were holding their own against Muslim domination. Unruly spirits from the upcountry, particularly the adherents of the House of Balban, naturally found a more congenial home in Bengal. To these were added the *Ghāzis* and *Avliyās* of Islam, who from this time onward were to play an increasingly important role in the history of this country.

Mr. Stapleton remarks that "the presence of numerous 'saints' and 'ghāzis' at this time might even have been due to some definite policy" on the part of the Delhi Sultans intent on the annexation of Bengal. But it is an altogether unwarranted surmise. These warrior-saints of Mediæval Bengal were the Knights-Templars of

[1] JASB. New Series, Vol. XVIII, 1922, p. 411.

Islam with a cleaner record of morality, and also of loyalty to the temporal power than those of the Cross in Mediæval Europe. If the popular Muslim tradition regarding the destruction of Gaur Govinda or Sylhet, and the Pandu Rajah of Hughly-Pandua contains any historical truth, it must, however, be admitted that these saints surrounded by a horde of less scrupulous followers used to enter the territory of the Hindu Rajahs as "squatters" on some pretext or other. Then they would bring down the regular army of the Muslim state upon these infidel kings to punish them for infringing the rights of Musalmans! Alluding to the well-known clemency of Sultan Jalaluddin Khilji who had deported boat-loads of *Thugs* about one thousand in number to Bengal to avoid spilling Musalman blood, Mr. Stapleton says, "The easiest way for the Sultans of Bengal to nullify such a whole-sale deportation......was to enrol these men in a 'Foreign Legion' and utilise them in warring against the infidel on the frontiers of Bengal......" (*Ibid.*, 415).

The Balbani regime in Bengal was not only a period of expansion but one of consolidation as well. It was during this time that the saints of Islam who excelled the Hindu priesthood and monks in active piety, energy and foresight, began proselytising on a wide scale not so much by force as by the fervour of their faith and their exemplary character. They lived and preached among the low class Hindus then as ever in the grip of superstition and social repression. These new converts in rural areas became a source of additional strength to the Muslim Government. About a century after the military and political conquest of Bengal, there began the process of the moral and spiritual conquest of the land through the efforts of the Muslim religious fraternities that now arose in every corner. By destroying temples and monasteries the Muslim warriors of earlier times had only appropriated their gold and silver; but the sword could not silence history, nor carry off their immortal spiritual treasure wherein lay rooted Hindu idolatry and Hindu nationalism. The 'saints' of Islam completed the process of conquest, moral and spiritual, by establishing *dargāhs* and *khānqahs* deliberately on the sites of these ruined places of Hindu and Buddhist worship. This served a double purpose of preventing the revival of these places of heathen sanctity, and later on, of installing themselves as the guardian deities with tales of pious fraud invented by popular imagination. Hindus who had been accustomed for centuries to venerate these places gradually forgot their past history, and easily transferred their allegiance to the *pirs* and *ghazis*. The result of this *rapprochement* in the domain of faith ultimately created a more tolerant atmosphere which kept the Hindus indifferent to their political destiny. It prepared the ground for the further

inroad of Islam into Hindu society, particularly among the lower classes who were gradually won over by an assiduous and persistent propaganda regarding the miracles of these saints and ghāzis, which were in many cases taken over *in toto* from old Hindu and Buddhist legends. Perhaps the most notable example of the invasion of the sites of Hindu worship by Muslim saints is the transformation of the *Sringi-Rishi-kund* into the *Makhdum-kund* at Rajgir, and the translation of the miracle-working Buddha of the Deva-datta legend into a venerable Muslim saint, Makhdum Sāhib. We shall elsewhere discuss in detail the process of the spiritual conquest of Bengal by Auliyās and lesser saints whose *tombs* and *āsthānas* lie scattered over the land.*

III. Sultan Nasiruddin (Bughra) and his successors.

Prince Nāsiruddin Mahmud Bughrā Khan, the founder of the line of the so-called Balbani Kings of Bengal, started his career as the Governor of Sāmāna (in modern Patiala State), and held that office till c. 679 A.H. He accompanied his father to Lakhnawati as the commander of the rear of the imperial army in 680 A.H. 1282 A.D., and was left behind as the Governor of Lakhnawati after the bloody suppression of the revolt of Tughral. The Prince had given no proof of capacity in early life. He was a slow-witted man, having neither eyes nor ears to take a lesson from things that happened around him. It is said that Sultan Balban appointed two nobles, each bearing the name of Firuz as advisers to his son; one was of Delhi, a Khilji of ripe judgment (*farkundah-rāi*); and the other was from Koh-Jud, a valliant soldier, "seizer of realms" (*kishwar-kashā*), who were enjoined to give good advice to the Prince "if he would in that country commit any fault". The Sultan on the eve of bidding farewell to his son, is said to have left some "Instructions" in writing for Bughra Khan, and concluded with a sad confession of despair. "I know that whatever principles of government I may enforce on this son of mine, he, through his devotion to pleasure, will disregard them."

* This process was continued—perhaps it still continues. The following passage quoted from a learned Muslim historian of the last century gives us a glimpse of the state of things in early times: "In former days, wandering Faqirs and poor Muhammadans came to Chatgaon district, and built opposite to Hindu shrines and Magh temples false graves declaring that these were the burial places of the famous saints Bayazid Bistami and Abdul Qadir Gilani, who never put their feet on these shores of infidelity" (*Tārikh-i-Chātgām*; Maulvi Hamiduddin Khan; Calcutta, 1878, p. 17).

However, Bughrā Khan ruled the province of Bengal for about six years, from the middle of 680 to that of 686 A.H. (c. 1281-87 A.D.) till his father's death. This ease-loving son of Balban found his paradise of pleasure and care-free life at Lakhnawati; his authority, however, was upheld in the province by his clever and valiant lieutenants, who seemed to have been carrying out during this time Balban's instruction to his son to conquer *'arsa-i-Bangāla'* (Sātgāon territory), and *iqlim-i-Bangāla* (Sonārgāon region) which had only been partially occupied before. Towards the close of his father's reign Bughrā was disturbed in his repose when he was summoned to Delhi (*c.* middle of 1286 A.D.). Balban's eldest son and Heir-Apparent to the throne of Delhi, Muhammad Sultan, had been killed in a fight with the infidel Mongols somewhere between Lahore and Dipalpur (Multan district) on the 3rd Zilhijjah 683 A.H. (10 Feb. 1285). So the Sultan wanted Bughrā Khan to stay at Court and assume the imperial robe after his death which was fast approaching. The unworthy son passed two months at Delhi in indecision, and at last fled from the prospects of an empire to his own viceroyalty of Bengal. The Sultan died a few months after (686 A.H. *c.* July, 1287) having settled the succession on his minor grandson Kai-Khusru (son of Khān-i-Shāhid). But the crafty and ambitious wazir, Nizāmuddin, with an ulterior design of usurping the government, set aside Balban's nominee and raised Kaiqubad (eldest son of Bughrā Khan, aged only eighteen) to the throne (686 A.H. c. July 1287). Bughrā Khan observed ceremonial mourning for his father's death for seven days* at Lakhnawati, and at the close of the week assumed the title, of Sultan Nāsiruddin Mahmud (c. last months of 686 A.H. September 1287). Meanwhile Nizāmuddin initiated young Kaiqubad (who had been brought up by Balban in a puritanical atmosphere carefully shielded from evil influences)—into the path of vice with the object of bringing about the puppet Sultan's ruin, physical and moral. After six months Sultan Kaiqubad took up his residence in his fairy palace at Kilukhari, now a village three miles from Humayun's Tomb. It is said that there passed a long correspondence between father and son; and when words of advice were of no avail, Sultan Nāsiruddin decided to march upon Delhi and seize the throne. With a large army Nāsiruddin entered the imperial province of Bihar and proceeded north-westward to occupy Oudh in the beginning of 687 A.H. (c. Feb. 1288). This news having reached Sultan Kaiqubad at Kilukhari, the imperial army began its

* *Futuh-us-Salatin*, p 183.

eastward march in the middle of the month of Rabi. I. 687 A.H.[1] (April, 1288).

The poet Amir Khusru accompanied this expedition, and at the request of Sultan Kaiqubad wrote a historical poem, *Qirān-us-Sa'dain* (completed in Ramzan 688; September, 1289), narrating the course of events that culminated in the pathetic scene of the meeting of Nāsiruddin and Kaiqubad on the plains of Ajodhya in the rainy season of 1288 A.D. All later medieval historians have based their account of this episode on the narrative of Amir Khusru, who said about his poem: *shaa'ri nist hamāh rāst āst* (no poetry but all true facts). The story briefly told runs as follows:

The imperial army marched by way of Tilpat and thence down the southern bank of the Jamuna possibly as far as Korah (modern Fathepur). Somewhere near it the Jamuna was crossed and Kaiqubad encamped at an unidentified place, Jaipur, in the lower Doab. From Jaipur an advance division was ordered forward under Malik Baq-baq *Bārbak* who was later joined by *Khan-i-Iwāz.* Barbak arrived within six *kos* of the Ghaggar river. The Bengal army was encamped on the other side of the Sarju river, opposite the city of Ajodhya. It is said that Sultan Nāsiruddin sent an envoy to Bārbak, and later another with a letter to Sultan Kaiqubad, who had in the meanwhile crossed the Ganges and entered the frontiers of Oudh. According to *Futuh-us-Salātin* Sultan Nāsiruddin and Kaiqubad were both eager for a compromise and meeting one another; Isami, the author of *Futuh-us-Salātin,* says more about the Bengal camp than Khusru, though not known on what authority. He tells us:

(Sultan Nāsiruddin said unto himself), "Surely the son of the devil must have brought me here—I who come here with an evil design against my own son." At last there was peace between the two. Prince Kai-kaus, son of Nāsiruddin, went to do homage to his elder brother with many presents. Kaiqubad sent his own son, Kaimurs, a baby in arms with his minister to the presence of his father. Old Nāsiruddin forgot himself at the sight of his grandson, and fondled the baby prince without taking any notice of the Delhi wazir and Kaiqubad's presents for some time. The Bengal Sultan himself expressed his wish to see his son even under the hard conditions imposed by Kaiqubad's evil genius, Malik Nizāmuddin.

2 Cowell published a masterly analysis of *Qiran-us-Sadain* as early as 1860 (JASB 1860; pp. 225-39). He is wrong in assuming that Rabi. I. mentioned in the text was of the *year 686,* which should be 687. Amir Khusru does not give enough topography for constructing the narrative of the journey of Kaiqubad.

One afternoon Sultan Nāsiruddin crossed the river Sarju to interview his son who was then seated high on the imperial *masnad.* But when father and son came within sight of each other, one was eager to leap out of the boat, and the other down from the throne. Kaiqubad ran barefooted to his father and was about to fall at his feet when the weeping father caught him in his embrace. Sultan Kaiqubad begged of his fathr to take his seat on the throne; whereas Nāsiruddin insisted that his son should not deprive him of the pleasure of conducting Kaiqubad to the imperial throne and crowning him as became a father and the first grandee of the Empire. Nāsiruddin solemnly led his son to the throne, and after having placed him on the *masnad,* he himself stood before the throne with folded hands. After obeying his father's importunity, the Sultan came down from the throne at once, and all the Amirs scattered gold and jewels upon the heads of the two Bādshāhs, father and son. People who were waiting outside were allowed to scramble for the offerings of *nisār.* A few days after Nāsiruddin paid his farewell visit to Sultan Kaiqubad and gave him in public much good advice, recommending Malik Nizāmuddin and Quāmuddin to his son's special favour. At the time of his departure Nāsiruddin whispered into his ears to put these two nobles to death at the first opportunity. Both the Sultans broke up their camps and started for their respective capitals during the rains.

From the political point of view the independence of Bengal was recognised by the Delhi Sultanate. Nāsiruddin evacuated the territory of Oudh which was made over to Khan Jahān Hātim Khan, an Amir of Kaiqubad. But Nāsiruddin retained the province of Bihār and appointed Firuz Aitigin, the Royal (Balbani ?) Mamluk as its governor. Sultan Kaiqubad administered poison to Malik Nizāmuddin about six months after with fatal consequences to himself. The young Sultan had lived his brief tenure of life too fast and died a miserable death at the hands of the Khiljis on the 19th of Muharram, 689 (*Mubarakshahi,* p. 59). Kaimurs, a mere child was placed on the throne (a few days before the murder of his ailing father) with the title of Sultan Shamsuddin, but cruelly put to death by Arkāli Khan (son of Jalāluddin Firuz Khilji) after a nominal reign of three months and a few days.[1] Thus the Delhi

[1] *Mubarakshahi,* p. 61. It is rather strange that the author names the son of Kaiqubad as Sultan Shamsuddin *Kaikaus,* and the editor of the text does not notice the mistake.

Barani, Isāmi and Amir Khusru mention only one son of Kaiqubad and he

branch of the House of Balban was destroyed, and the Sultanate of Delhi passed away for ever from the aristocratic Mamluks of genuine Turkish extraction to men of the mixed breed of Turkoman Khiljis and half-breed Tughlaqs.

The news of the tragic end of his son and grandson perhaps reached Sultan Nāsiruddin Mahmud by the middle of the year 689 A.H., about two months after the accession of Sultan Jalāluddin Firuzshāh Khilji at Delhi (Rabi. II, 689, *c.* April 1290 A.D.). The reaction was sad upon the old Sultan. He discarded the insignia of royalty, probably out of sheer disgust for life and not from any fear of the Khilji Sultan of Delhi as *Riyaz* suggests. This happened perhaps towards the close of the year 689 A.H. as the upward limit of the reign of his son and successor Ruknuddin Kaiqaus comes up to the year 690 by numismatic evidence. It is not known how long Nāsiruddin lived after his abdication; at any rate it is reasonable to hold that he died before the usurpation of the *masnad* of Lakhnawati by Sultan Shamsuddin Firuz Shah of Delhi (*cir.* 701 A.H. September 1301 A.D.).

The character of Sultan Nāsiruddin Mahmud reveals itself by the words of advice he gave to his son Kaiqubad, and also through Balban's remarks about him recorded in the pages of Barani. He was wise in counsel, weak in action, and unaggressive by temperament. Though there was nothing to admire in him, his was a loveable and genial personality, strong in humane virtues. He reigned rather than ruled the kingdom of Bengal; but he enjoyed throughout the esteem of his nobles and popularity with his subjects in the land of his adoption.

IV. Reign of Sultan Ruknuddin Kaikaus (*c.* 690-701 A.H.; 1291-1301 A.D.)

Kaikaus, the only surviving progeny of the Bengal branch of the House of Balban claiming descent from Sultan Nāsiruddin Mahmud, was raised to the throne of Lakhnawati perhaps after the abdication of his father in 690 A.H. He must have been at this time hardly out of his teens. The earliest evidence of his rule is a silver coin minted at Lakhnawati "out of the spoils of Bengal" bearing the date

is *Kaimurs* (*Firuzshahi*, p. 126). The dates, given by *Mubarakshahi* seem to be correct. *Riyaz's* date, "end of the year 689 A.H." for the murder of Kaiqubad is absolutely wrong (Text. p. 88).

690 A.H. The uninterrupted coinage of Kaikaus from the same mint down to 698 A.H. at least, and three inscriptions of the same ruler covering the same period, prove beyond doubt that Sultan Ruknuddin Kaikaus was acknowledged as the suzerain of Bihar and Bengal for a period of eight years if not longer. The independent Sultanate of Bengal had split up during his father's time into four big governorships—Bihar, Sātgām (Saptagrām), Bang and Devkot. These frontier marches fenced in the territory of Lakhnawati (including Rādh) where a mild ruler might reign in peace if he could hold the balance even among his Wardens of the Marches. Traditions of local independence had become rooted deep in the soil for centuries, cut up as Bengal then was (as it is even now) into self-contained regions each having for its natural boundaries rivers as big as those that marked the boundaries of medieval European States. After the extinction of petty Hindu principalities these traditions were inherited by their Muslim masters, when they forgot their common dangers as well as the common racial and religious patriotism that had given them victory at the initial stage of conquest. These centrifugal tendencies were becoming gradually manifest in the first decade of the fourteenth century till the whole country was turned into a veritable *Bulghakpur* in the days of the Bāra Bhuinyās in the last quarter of the sixteenth century.

Sultan Ruknuddin Kaikaus maintained his hold well over a number of feudatories, among whom Malik Firuz Aitigin the Mamluk was the most powerful. The Lakhisarai (Monghyr district) inscription of Kaikaus, dated Muharram 697 A.H. (October 1297) records the building of a Jama' mosque by Ziāuddin Ulugh Khan, the deputy-governor of the great Khan Ikhtyāruddin Firuz Aitigin *as-Sultāni,* and gives the title and descent of the sovereign as "Kaikaus, *Sultan bin sultan bin sultan.*" .The Devkot inscription of the same ruler also exactly of the same date (Muharram, 697 A.H.), commemorates the construction of a mosque at Devkot (the first capital of Islam in Bengal). This mosque was built, says the inscription, in the reign of *Sultān-us-salātin* Kaikaus *Shah,* son of Mahmud, son of a Sultan—under orders of Shihāb-uddin Zafar Khan Bahrām Aitigin *as-Sultāni* (royal Mamluk). An Arabic inscription of another Zafar Khan (Tribeni, Sātgānw; dated 698 A.H.) tells us that "in the reign of Sultān-us-salātin Kaikaus . . . whose government has revived the memory of all the assemblies of Jamshed's time, . . . Zafar Khan, the lion of lions . . ." built a Madrasa to propagate Islamic learning in the Sātgānw territory, which like the

Sonārgānw region was in the process of conquest and annexation during this time.[1]

The reign of Sultan Ruknuddin Kaikaus (*c.* 690-701 A.H.) in Bengal synchronises roughly with the reign of Sultan Jalāluddin Khilji and the early years of Alauddin's reign (695-715 A.H.). About this time the mighty Ahom King, Sukhampha (1293-1322 A.H.) was fast consolidating his hold on Assam, and the Hindu chiefs of Tirhut were still maintaining their independence, though cooped up between the province of Oudh of the Delhi Sultanate and that of Bihar (an annexe of the Sultanate of Lakhnawati which was at this time bounded by the lower course of the Ghaggar on the north-west and the river Son perhaps on the south-west). No intercourse, hostile or friendly, with these neighbouring kingdoms is on record except that Sultan Jalāluddin Khilji, much averse to shedding Muslim blood, is said to have banished boat-loads of *Thugs* from Delhi to the kingdom of Bengal.

Lakhnawati was a far cry for Sultan Jalāluddin. In the second year of his reign Malik Chhajju the feudatory of Kara-Manikpur and brother's son of Balban, assumed independence and struck coins in his own name (JASB. 1883, p. 61; Barani's *Firuzshahi*, p. 181 ff). There was a general rising of all fief-holders of the Balbani regime in the eastern districts of modern U.P., and such powerful nobles as Hātim Khan, governor of Oudh (*Māwāli-zadah* of Balban), and the Hindu zamindars joined the standard of Malik Chhajju, who boldly began his march upon Delhi. Next year Abdullah, grandson of Halagu invaded the Punjab (691 A.H.). So Jalāluddin's hands were too full to give him any respite for attempting the conquest of Bengal. Mr. Stapleton has indulged in mere imagination when he says, "the presence of numerous 'saints' and 'ghazis' in Bengal at this time might even have been due to some definite policy on the part of the Delhi sovereign (Alauddin).[2] Alauddin had nothing to do with the arrival of these Knights-Templars of Islam to wage war against the unsubdued Hindu chiefs of Bengal. We have no reason to hold that these "warriors in the path of Allah" were so degenerate as to act as the Fifth Columnists of one Muslim State against another.

[1] *Epigr. Indo-Mos.* 1917-1918, pp. 10-15.

[2] Vide JASB. New Series, Vol. XVIII, 1922, p. 414.

V. Sultan Shamsuddin Firuz Shah
(c. 701-722 A.H.; 1301-1322 A.D.)

All modern writers from Blochmann to Mr. Stapleton have without much modification accepted the genealogy of the Balbani kings of Bengal as reconstructed by Thomas, eighty years ago. They have included Sultan Shamsuddin and his sons among the descendants of Sultan Nāsiruddin Mahmud on the very doubtful testimony of Ibn Batuta, without explaining satisfactorily why among all the rulers of this dynasty, Shamsuddin Firuz, the most powerful Sultan among the so-called Balbani kings with a reign of twentyone years to his credit,—should have omitted on his coins the common phrase "the Sultan bin Sultan" that distinguishes a princely successor to a throne from a "new man" rising to kingship. His pedigree must remain unknown till the discovery of any coin or inscription referring to him as *the Sultan son of a Sultan.*

The Mamluk regime which had come to an end at Delhi with the accession of the Khiljis to power continued in Bengal for about forty years more till Sultan Muhammad Tughlaq reduced it again to a province of his empire. Firuz, a *slave* of the Sultan (Balban ?), who had perhaps virtually ruled the country in the time of the ease-loving Bughrā Khan, and afterwards became the feudatory governor of Bihar on behalf of Kaikaus,—in all probability ascended the throne of Lakhnawati after the extinction of the Bengal branch of the House of Balban with the death of Kaikaus. It is a reasonable guess that Firuz Aitigin of Bihar had already become semi-independent and he seized the government of Bengal after the death of Kaikaus, natural or violent.

Sultan Shamsuddin Firuz Shah entrusted the government of Bihar to one of his sons Tājuddin Hātim Khan, who did not, like his brothers Shihābuddin Bughdah and Bahadur, ever rebel against Firuz Shah. There are two inscriptions of the time of Firuz from Bihar dated respectively 709 and 715 A.H., bearing the name of Firuz Shah as sovereign and that of Hātim Khan as governor. A third inscription of Firuz Shah of Bengal in Zafar Khan's tomb at Tribeni dated 713 A.H. commemorates the building of another *Madrasa* at Tribeni (the previous one having been built in 698 A.H. by Zafar Khan)—called *Dār-ul-Khairāt* by Shihābuddin Zafar Khan, Khan-i-Jahān, the feudatory of Sātgānw. This Zafar Khan, Khan-i-Jahan of the reign Sultan Shamsuddin Firuz was an altogether different person from Zafar Khan, the warrior-saint, who had built a Madrasa in the same locality (Tribeni) fifteen years earlier in

698 A.H. The present mausoleum undoubtedly enshrines the grave of Zafar Khan *Ghāzi of the Kursi-nāmah* noticed first by Mr. D. Money as early as 1847 A.D. (*JASB.* 1847). But its sanctity in history lies in the fact that it has become in the course of time a museum of Muslim Epigraphy on account of the preservation of many inscription-slabs of different times built into different parts of this mausoleum.

Similarly no successful attempt has been made to reconstruct the history of Sātgānw during the reigns of Kaikaus and Firuz Shah. Mr. Stapleton curiously enough identifies Zafar Khan *Ghazi* with Zafar Khan, *Khan-i-Jahan,* and says that the Ghazi accepted "subordination to Shamsuddin Firuzshah" (JASB. New Series XVIII, p. 412). We have no reason to disbelieve that Zafar Khan *Ghāzi* died a martyr in a battle with some Hindu chief (may be Bhudev Nripati or some other) of Hooghly. This shows that he died at the initial stage of the conquest of the Sātgānw region a few years after 698 A.H. in the reign of Kaikaus probably, and not as late as 713 A.H. as suggested by Mr. Money (JASB. 1847). According to the *Kursi-nāmah,* a son and successor of Zafar Khan *Ghāzi,* named *Ugwhān Khan* resumed the fight with the infidels, subdued and converted them, and married a daughter of the Rajah. We think that this *Ugwhan* Khan was a Bengali corruption of the name of Ulugh Khan, and we are inclined to identify him with Ziāuddin Ulugh Khan of the Lakhiserai inscription. It is quite likely that Shamsuddin Firuz Shah after having become Sultan of Lakhnawati transferred his loyal servant, Ziāuddin Ulugh Khan from Monghyr to Sātgānw, and that he vigorously resumed the war against the Hindu chiefs of the neighbourhood. The *Kursināmah* says that after some time Ugwhan Khan died also at Tribeni. The government of Sātgānw was next conferred by Firuz Shah on Shihābuddin Zafar Khan Bahrām Aitigin *as-Sultāni* (—feudatory of Devkot in the reign of Kaikaus, see Devkot inscription of 697 A.H.). This second Zafar Khan, the builder of the *Dār-ul-Khairāt* at Tribeni, styles himself *Ziāul Haq wa al-Din . . . Zafar Khan,* drops *Bahrām Aitigin as-Sultani,* adds *Khan-i-Jahan* (his official title), and assumes a loftier tone by calling himself "the aider of kings and monarchs, the patron of believers." This imperial-Mamluk brother had perhaps helped Firuz in the dynastic revolution after the death of Kaikaus, and hence his claim to be the "aider of kings and monarchs." On the other hand, Zafar Khan *Ghāzi* does not call himself "aider of kings and monarchs" though he does not ignore

the reigning sovereign Kaikaus. It is only thus that legend and history around Sātgānw can perhaps be harmonised.

Perhaps the greatest event of the reign of Sultan Shamsuddin Firuz (Dehlavi) was the expansion of the Muslim power into the modern Mymensingh district and thence across the Brahmaputra into the Sylhet district of Assam. From their new base of operations at Sonārgānw, it was but natural that the Muslims should attempt to round off their conquest of East Bengal and penetrate into Sylhet, which was in medieval times a *sarkār* or the Subah of Bengal. Sylhet received a large influx of high-caste Hindu refugees, particularly Brahmans, following the expansion of the Muslim power south and eastward from Lakhnawati. The legendary account of the Muslim conquest of Sylhet is available in a later compilation, Nāsiruddin Haidar's *Suhail-i-Yaman.* There are also Hindu legends regarding the defeat of the valiant Rajah, Gaur Gobinda of Sylhet, by an army led by *pirs* and *ghāzis,* and reinforced by the troops of the Sultan of Bengal, Sultan Shamsuddin in the last quarter of the fourteenth century. *Suhail-i-Yaman* is not a very trustworthy compilation, and with the Hindu legends the difficulty is that no Sultan with the title of Shamsuddin reigned in Bengal in the *last* quarter of the fourteenth century. Mr. Stapleton is right in fixing the date of the first invasion of Sylhet by Muslim armies in 703 A.H. (1303 A.D.), on the authority of the Dacca Museum inscription of one Rukn Khan dated 918 A.H. (1512 A.D.).[1] The *badshah* in whose reign Rukn Khan flourished was evidently Alauddin Husain Shah (1493-1518 A.D.). Though this inscription records perhaps only a tradition current two hundred years after the conquest of Sylhet, its authority is certainty much greater than that of the still later Hindu and Muslim legends referred to above. It is curious that this inscription gives us the *second* part (Firuz Shah *Dehlavi*), whereas the Hindu tradition gives the *first* half (Sultan *Shamsuddin*) of the name of the Bengal Sultan in whose reign the Muslims scored their initial success in Sylhet.

As regards the *causus belli* between the Muslims and the independent Hindu Rajahs, there is that stock-story given by Hindus and Muslims alike, *i.e.*, a cow is secretly killed in a Hindu territory, a piece of the beef is dropped by a kite either on the Hindu palace

[1] JASB. New Series, Vol. XVIII, 1922; pp. 413-14. Mr. Stapleton's view *viz.* that Firuz Shah (Shamsuddin) was called Delhevi because he was descended from Bughra Khan, son of Balban, who came from Delhi, has been refuted in **Appendix A (Chronology) of this chapter.**

or on the house of a Brahman, and the Muslim subjects are punished for the act by the Hindu Rajah; then an appeal for revenge is made to some *ghāzi* or the reigning Sultan, and the episode closes with a war and the defeat of the Hindus. Imperialism, whether Hindu, Muslim, or Christian, never cries a halt half-way in the full swing of its success; so the poor cow need not be held responsible for the invasion of Sylhet by the Muslims.

Sultan Shamsuddin Firuz Shah ascended the throne of Bengal at a rather advanced age (perhaps about fifty), when he was the father of half-a-dozen grown-up sons impatient of getting the kingly power. All the history that can be gleaned from the bewildering numismatic evidence, studied so carefully by Mr. Stapleton, may be summarised as follows:

(*i*) Shamsuddin Firuz reigned peacefully till 707 A.H. over the whole of Bihar, Lakhnawati, Sātgānw and Bang (Sonārgāon).

(*ii*) His son Jalāluddin issued coins "out of the spoils of Bang" from the Lakhnawati mint, which was a signal for revolt among his other sons.

(*iii*) Bahadur, another son of Firuz, supplants the authority of Jalāluddin and of his father also, in or about 710 A.H., and issues coins from the Lakhnawati mint from 710 A.H. till 714 A.H., concurrently with his father's coins during the same period. These are independent issues, Bahadur making no mention of his father, except in vaguely designating himself as *Sultan bin Sultan.*

This issue of coins by two Sultans, father and son, concurrently during this period cannot be explained satisfactorily.

(*iv*) Bahadur was ousted from Lakhnawati by his father in 715 A.H., because we have coins of Firuz issued in that year. But another son of Firuz, Shihābuddin Bughdāh Shāh (wrongly corrected by the numismatists as *Bughrā*); declares himself independent at Lakhnawati and remains in power for two years, as his coins of 717 and 718 A.H. show.

(*v*) Between 715 and 719 A.H. Bahadur's fortune seems to have been under a temporary eclipse in North Bengal. But he continues as Sultan in East Bengal, as he issues coins from the Sonārgāon mint. In the same year, *i.e.*, 717, he evidently lost Lakhnawati to Shihabuddin Bughdāh Shah (vide Bughdah's coin of 717 A.H.). As

no coin of Bahadur earlier than 717 A.H. from the Sonārgānw mint has come to light, whereas we have one of Firuz from this eastern mint town bearing the date 710 A.H.—we may tentatively hold that Bahadur had made himself master of Sonārgānw also in or about 711 A.H., and after having lost Lakhnawati retired to Sonārgānw again in 717 A.H. and lived there till 720 A.H. when his coinage reappears bearing the dates 720, 721, 722 and 723 A.H. Coins of Firuz bearing the same dates terminate in 722 A.H., which marks the end of his reign probably by death in the same year. Bahadur after the death of his father murdered all his brothers except one Nāsiruddin Ibrāhim who remained in hiding.

The reign of Sultan Shamsuddin Firuz was disturbed by the rebellion of his sons, the most turbulent among whom was Bahadur. This rebel ruled as Sultan Ghyāsuddin Bahadur Shah and issued coins from the Lakhnawati mint from 710 A.H. Bahadur had kept his father out of East Bengal also since 710 A.H., and had a chequered career till it ended in a miserable death in or about 730 A.H.[1] So Shamsuddin Firuz may be said to have ruled effectively only in Bihar and in West Bengal (Sātgānw) from 710 to 722 A.H. Like Shahjahan he had his Nemesis in his own family, and his sons gave him only too well the compliment of imitating their father. Nevertheless, Shamsuddin Firuz was a ruler of exceptional ability which saved him from the tragedy of Shahjahan in his own life-time. It is also important to note a weakness of Firuz; namely that Shamsuddin Firuz had the ambition of *Firuz*-ising Bengal cities. Tribeni in Hooghly District was named Firuzabad according to the local Muslim tradition, and Blochmann rightly holds that this name must have been given to this place by Shamsuddin Firuz Shah of Bengal. We have reason to believe that the site of Pandua as a more strategic and healthier site for the future capital of Bengal than the old city of Lakhnawati, attracted the attention of Shamsuddin Firuz Shah, and that Pandua was named Firuzabad after himself by this illustrious Sultan. Here, again, the tradition ascribes the name to Firuz Shah of Delhi (*Dehlavi*), which term has been wrongly taken to mean Sultan

[1] Thomas read 730 A.H. as the date of the Ghyāspur coin of Bahadur (*The Initial Coinage of Bengal*; JASB. 1867, p. 51), and the reading of Thomas is corrected as 722 A.H. by Mr. Stapleton (JASB. New Series, Vol. XVIII, p. 417).

Firuz Shah Tughluq.[1] Neither Thomas nor any succeeding writer on the history of this period has satisfactorily explained the origin of the name *Firuzabad.* So far as the numismatic evidence goes, between the last issue of Muhammad Tughlaq of a Lakhnawati coin in 733 A.H., and the first issue of the coins of Sultan Shamsuddin Ilyās Shah of Bengal from the Firuzabad (old Pandua) mint in 740 A.H. this transfer of capital was effected. Ilyās Shah on his accession must have found Firuzabad already a respectable town with the self-same name in official use at least. This fact disproves the general belief countenanced by all modern authorities that Sultan Firuz Shah Tughlaq on his retreat from Ekdālā halted at Pandua and *named it Firuzabad, i.e.,* in the year 755 A.H. Bengal did not have a second Sultan of the name of Firuz within one hundred and seventy years (till the accession of the Habshi king Saifuddin Firuz in 892 A.H.) after the death of Shamsuddin Firuz (c. 722 A.H.). So none but this Firuz Shah *Dehlavi* of Bengal could have been the founder of the city of Firuzabad-Pandua. Pandua-Firuzabad is magnificent even in ruin, and its site suited well the growing needs of commerce and communication with North Bihar and Oudh, by water and land. Shamsuddin Firuz perhaps designed the new city not only to perpetuate his name but also as a safe place of refuge against any Khilji invasion of Bengal.

Thus lived and died Shamsuddin Firuz, the founder of a new Mamluk dynasty in Bengal after the extinction of the House of Balban. He died full of years, of glory and a fame which has now been buried deep under the debris of Time.

VI. Extinction of the Mamluk Sultanate of Bengal

(*cir.* 722-28 A.H./1322-28 A.D.)

The last phase of the short-lived Mamluk Sultanate of Bengal is practically a continuation of the turbulent career of Bahadur who had rebelled against his father Firuz as early as 710 A.H. if not earlier. The history of this period is a very confused one and the confusion has been worse confounded by the fanciful theory of Thomas regarding the ancestry of Firuz and his sons, who have been included among the descendants of Balban. All later historians

[1] The Bengal Sultan Firuz was a newcomer from Delhi and not sprung from any old royal line of Bengal; hence his distinctive epithet *Dehlavi*, which does not necessarily mean 'ruler of Delhi'.

from Blochmann down to Mr. Stapleton have followed Thomas and Ibn Batuta. That great African traveller came to Bengal more than twenty years after the death of Firuz, and twenty years still later he wrote his *Travels* from memory only, all his notes having been lost during his homeward voyage. A cardinal fact revealed by the numismatics of Medieval India, particularly of Bengal, is that no medieval ruler ever dispensed with " supererogatory adjuncts such as *bin Sultan*," or a less honourable one *al-Sultani* (the slave royal), on their coins.[1] Ghyasuddin Bahadur Shah (like his brothers Jalaluddin Mahmud, Shihabuddin Bughda, and Nasiruddin Ibrahim Shah who issued coins) styles himself as *Sultan bin Sultan* on his numerous coins now extant. Had any of the above been a Pretender of the House of Balban, he would not have surely omitted *more than one bin Sultan* after his name, whether he might be a son or brother of Ruknuddin Kaikaus Shah, grandson of Balban.

Riyaz gives an unusually long reign of thirty-eight years to Bahadur Shah, surnamed *Bhurah* on account of his blue eyes and brown moustache perhaps. This is very hard to reconcile with reliable history; because even two reigns (Firuz from 698 A.H. and down to the death of Bahadur, *cir.* 728 A.H.) calculated at their longest hardly give us thirty years for the duration of the Mamluk Sultanate founded by Shamsuddin Firuz. However, the upward limit of Ghyasuddin Bahadur Shah's independent rule can safely be fixed at 710 A.H. and the downward limit at 728 A.H., thus giving him a chequered career of twenty years' rule in Lakhnawati and Sonarganw with two interruptions. During his father's life-time 710 A.H. to 715 A.H. he ruled in independence either at Lakhnawati or in some part of North Bengal, though his sovereignty was disputed by his father. For two years, 717 and 718 A.H. his brother, Shihabuddin *Bughdah* (not *Bughra*) ousted him at Lakhnawati. But Bahadur compensated himself by seizing Sonarganw about this time if not earlier, and set up his independent court at the eastern capital. Again from 720 A.H. to 722 A.H. father and son are found disputing the *de facto* sovereignty of Lakhnawati, and at last after his father's death Bahadur made himelf undisputed master of Lakhnawati as well as of Sonarganw. It is rather unaccountable why Sātgānw does not figure on the coinage of this period. Barani tells us that Bengal on the eve of Sultan Tughluq Shah's invasion of Bengal in 724 A.H. (1324 A.D.) was divided into three political units, Lakhnawati, Sonarganw and Sātgānw, with rulers (*zābitān*) in each. However, it is not unlikely that Bahadur murdered his brothers, Kutlu Khan and others (as Ibn Batuta says, though there is no other reliable evidence of the existence of such brothers).

It is doubtful whether Shihabuddin Bughdah was at all alive after the death of Firuz to solicit help from Tughluq Shah of Delhi, as Ibn Batuta adds. Had Bughdah been living at the time of Tughluq Shah's invasion there is no reason why he should not have joined the imperialists and got a preference over Nasiruddin Ibrahim in his claim to the sovereignty of Lakhnawati. It is also not correct to hold that Tughluq Shah invaded Bengal to punish the misdeeds of Bahadur Shah. There may be some truth in Barani's statement that "some *Amirs* of Lakhnawati" had fled from the high-handedness and oppression of the *rulers* (*zābitān*) of Lakhnawati ; but they are not mentioned to have made any allegation against Bahadur particularly. There is hardly any reason why the *Muslims* of Bengal should have suffered so much at the hands of Muslim princes contending for the sovereignty of Lakhnawati as to justify the pious Sultan's unprovoked attack on another Muslim State.

Sultan Ghyāsuddin Tughluq Shah started on his fateful eastward march in the beginning of 724 A.H. (January 1324 A.D.) with the object of conquering Tirhut and Bengal. The last semblance of Hindu independence in Mithila under the Karnatak dynasty vanished, and Tirhut became a mint-town of the Tughluq empire under the name *Tughluqpur urf Tirhut*. Nāsiruddin Ibrāhim Shah, son of Firuz, had, it seems, made himself master of Lakhnawati shortly before the arrival of the imperialists in Tirhut ; because he is spoken of as the " ruler of Lakhnawati " by Barani (supported also by Isāmi) when he presented himself before Tughluq Shah at Tirhut. At any rate Nāsiruddin Ibrāhim was a traitor, who offered to bring Bahadur a captive to Tughluq Shah if an army were sent with him. Sultan Ghyāsuddin Tughlaq Shah sent his best general Bahrām Khan *alias* Tātār Khan at the head of a select body of troops with Nāsiruddin from Tirhut to proceed against Bahadur Shah. The imperial army advanced with great caution and in proper array, having placed Sultan Nāsiruddin on the " left-hand side" of the centre. Its immediate objective was no doubt Lakhnawati and thence to Bahādur's new stronghold in East Bengal.

Bahadur had founded a new city, *Ghyāspur* in the modern Mymensingh district, from which it was more convenient to keep and eye on Lakhnawati, Sonarganw and the portions of Sylhet annexed to the Sultanate of Bengal by his father. A capable soldier and politician, Bahādur Shah could not fail to scent the danger from Delhi, and it was also a known fact that Lakhnawati in spite of its fortifications was strategically unsuited for a stand against invaders from the west ; similarly any retreat to Sonarganw meant

ultimate defeat. The position of Ghyāspur (from which Bahādur issued coins in 722 A.H.) has very satisfactorily been identified by Mr. Stapleton with Enāyetpur (still known as *Khyāspur* to the people of the locality), a village "15 miles south-west of the present town of Mymensingh, on the upper reaches of the Banar river that drains the centre of the Madhupur jungle into the Lakhyā . . ."[1] The activities of Nāsiruddin at Lakhnawati and the rumoured approach of the imperial army brought Bahādur Shah back to his northern capital. According to Isāmi when Bahrām Khan reached the neighbourhood (of Lakhnawati) Bahādur came out of the town with his army to give battle. No other historian except Isāmi gives full details of the fight between Bahadur and the imperialists. Isāmi was as much a contemporary as Barani and Ibn Batuta; the last-named having reached Hindustan about twenty years after this event. From Barani and Yahya Sarhindi (author of the *Mubārakshāhi*) one gets the impression that Bahādur was chased, caught and brought to the presence of Tughluq Shah like a runaway horse with a halter round his neck. Though a history written in verse always raises the suspicion of rhetorical exaggeration, it is not fair to reject facts in verse until they are positively proved to be untrue in the light of better known authorities. We give here the account of the struggle of Bahadur Shah against the imperial army in the light of *Fatuh-us-Salātin.*

"Next day both armies got into battle array for the encounter. Bahadur posted himself in the centre . . . For a time the right and left wings of both the armies pressed one another. Then the *Purah* (Bhurah, Bahādur) moved forward saying unto himself, 'Today is verily the day of *Id* (festival) for me, now that I draw my sword against the hosts of Delhi.' Then Bahādur fell upon the left-hand side (of the imperial centre where his hated brother Nāsiruddin was posted) with such vigour that the troops on the left hand side gave way . . . But the imperialists rectified their position, and in their turn pressed the Bengal army so hard that Bahādur's army was thrown into confusion. Bahādur found no other alternative except retreat, and when he retraced his steps to some distance, the imperialists with drawn swords, charged and spread carnage and terror in the ranks of Bahādur—Bahādur during

[1] Vide *JASB.* New Series, Vol. XVIII, p. 417). Sultan Nāsiruddin apparently alluded to this fort (Ghyāspur) of Bahādur Shah, and not to Lakhnawati or Sonarganw. One objection against Mr. Stapleton's identification is that no *ruins* of fortifications are traceable. *Ghyāspur* was perhaps designed as a jungle fortress like Ekdala of later days.

the confusion of the flight remembered that his heart-ravishing concubine, of silvery complexion and rosy checks, was in his tent . . . Bahādur turned his face towards his camp for taking away with himself that moon-faced one."

Bahādur Shah retreated to Banga not by water but overland. as it appears from Isāmi's account. Bahrām sent a detachment in pursuit of Bahādur under Haibatullah Khan Qasuri. The Bengal army had evidently taken the road to Khyāspur because Bahādur's troops, says Isāmi, had traversed "two or three hill-ridges" and this must be somewhere near the Madhupur Jungle where such ridges are to be found. While crossing a *rud-bār* (channel formed by a torrent or a river), Bahādur's mount stuck fast in the mud; and from behind there closed upon him "the swift crocodiles of war" (the imperialists). They took his prisoner, and brought him before Bahrām Khan.

Taken to Lakhnawati, where Tughluq Shah held his court at the time, the prisoner of war was presented with a string (*rishta*) found his neck, as was customary in those days. It appears that Tughluq Shah stayed on a month or two after Bahādur's capture to gather the spoils of war. At last he left Lakhnawati for Delhi after having confirmed Sultan Nāsiruddin in the government of North Bengal, and Bahrām Khan in the possession of the Sonarganw and Sātgānw regions which were annexed to the empire. In the very same year (724 A.H.) Nāsiruddin Ibrāhim issued coins in the joint names of himself and his sovereign Tughluq Shah. Bahādur was taken away a captive to Delhi, and Bahram Khan was left behind to establish imperial rule in Banga and Sātgānw. Delhi proved a far cry to Tughluq Shah, who was given a burial alive by his son Muhammad Junā under the debris of the royal pavilion at Afghānpur in the month of Rabi. I. 725 A.H. (Feb.-March, 1325).

VII. Later career of Sultān Nāsiruddin Ibrāhim and Sultān Ghyāsuddin Bahādur Shāh

Sultan Nāsiruddin Ibrāhim as a loyal vassal of Delhi issued coins the name of Sultan Ghyāsuddin Tughluq Shah jointly with his own from the Lakhnawati mint in 724 A.H., and continued the usage of joint issue in the reign of Tughluq Shah's successor down to 726 A.H. probably. But Nāsiruddin did not *die* in 726 A.H. as Mr. Stapleton suggests on this numismatic evidence of the end of Nāsiruddin's independence, and the positive statement of the un-

reliable Ferishta regarding Nāsiruddin's death in that year. Sultan Nāsiruddin's authority in Lakhnawati was no doubt greatly circumscribed by the new administrative policy which Muhammad Tughluq on his accession to the throne (Rabi. I. 725 A.H. Feb.-March 1325) initiated throughout the empire. The province of Bengal was now virtually a protectorate ruled by Tughluq Shah's adopted son Bahrām Khan *alias* Tātār Khan, who had been left behind to complete the work of annexing Sonārgānw and Sātgānw directly to the empire. Muhammad Tughluq, a shrewd imperialist, perhaps scented future danger from the east. In order to put a brake on the ambition of Bahrām Khan and Sultan Nāsiruddin Ibrāhim, both proteges of his murdered father,—Muhammad Tughluq released the captive Sultan Ghyāsuddin Bahādur Shah, bestowed high honours upon him ; and sent him back to Sonārgānw, which Bahādur was to rule as a vassal king in co-operation with Bahrām Khan as the emperor's representative. He also made other appointments in Bengal about the same time, *viz.*, Malik Pindār (or *Bedār*) Khilji with the title of Qadar Khan was appointed feudatory of Lakhnawati, and Malik Abu Raza as *Nizam-ul-mulk* and *Wazir* of Lakhnawati ; Izzuddin Yahyā as Azam Malik and feudatory of Sātgānw.[1] With regard to Nāsiruddin Ibrāhim, Sultan Muhammad Tughluq followed the same policy which the present Supreme Government of India generally follows in appointing a Diwan directly to a Native State the ruler of which has ceased to enjoy its confidence. At any rate it was a policy of admirable checks and balances. *Riyāz* is not correct in saying that Qadar Khan Khilji was appointed governor of Lakhnawati *after the death* of Nāsiruddin Ibrāhim ; because a very contemporary authority, Isāmi, says that when Sultan Muhammad Tughluq was mobilising his army in Delhi for the suppression of the rebellion of Kishlu Khan (Bahrām Aiba of Multān), Nāsiruddin came from Lakhnawati, went with the Emperor to Multān, and there distinguished himself in the battle with Kishlu Khan ;[2] and it is a known fact that this rebellion took place not earlier than 728 A.H. (1327-28 A.D.).

The position of Sultan Nāsiruddin Ibrāhim in Lakhnawati after the accession of Muhammad Tughluq was anything but enviable. He was allowed to continue as a phantom of royalty in Lakhnawati without power. Qadar Khan governed the districts as a governor theoretically subordinate to Nāsiruddin as well, but responsible only to the emperor for his actions. Abu Raza's posi-

[1] For these appointments, *Mubarakshahi*, p. 98.

[2] *Fatuh-us-salātin*, p. 420, p. 424.

tion was similarly that of a provincial *wazir*, whose duties were, however, those of *Mustaufi* (Accountant-General) in charge of the provincial finances. These measures were not contrived solely for Bengal as we read of the appointment of provincial wazirs—(like the provincial *diwans* whose original official title under Akbar was also *wazir*)—for revenue administration; *e.g.*, Razi-ul-mulk, *wazir* of Ma'bar; Malik Ashraf, wazir of Tilang (Barani, p. 454-455). There was nothing unusual in summoning Nāsiruddin from Lakhnawati to join the imperial army, because such vassal kings (generally Hindus) were similarly required to fight the battles of the empire. But there was perhaps a sinister motive also on the part of the Sultan Muhammad Tughluq; because when poor Nāsiruddin Ibrāhim had gone to Delhi his name was omitted from the coinage of Lakhnawati from 727 A.H. onward. This was nothing but deposition though Nāsiruddin was allowed to retain his title of *Sultān*. The Delhi emperor had recourse to this policy on account of his fear that Nāsiruddin might make common cause with Sultān Ghyāsuddin Bahādur Shah whose acts and correspondence with Delhi had raised suspicions in the emperor's mind about this time. However, where and when Nāsiruddin died after 728 A.H. need not be speculated upon, as his death in no way affected the future history of Bengal.

Sultan Ghyāsuddin Bahādur Shah was a much nobler character than the docile traitor Nāsiruddin Ibrāhim. He was a born rebel and was destined to die a rebel. After his restoration to his principality of Sonārgānw, Bahādur continued for about three years, till 728 A.H., to issue coins from the Sonārgānw mint in the joint names of himself and Muhammad Tughluq. He was not of the mettle to play second fiddle, or care for the ignoble ease of splendid vassalage. Besides, the Emperor marred his act of kindness to Bahādur by associating with him in the government of East Bengal the all-powerful imperial general Bahrām Khan *alias* Tātār Khan. For a time there was no clash between the two; because there were still unsubdued regions on the other side of the Meghnā river to be brought under the sway of Delhi. It was during the first three years of Muhammad Tughluq's reign that the modern Tipperah and Chittagong Divisions were occupied and annexed to the Delhi Empire. Fakhruddin popularly known as Fukhrā (later on Fakhruddin Mubārakshāh), the *silah-dār* (armour-bearer) of Bahrām Khan, had his seat according to popular tradition, at first at Bhuluwa (or present Noakhali), and it was from across the Meghnā that Fakhruddin attempted the conquest of the Sonārgānw region after the death of Bahrām Khan (c. 738 A.H.).

Encouraged by the absence of the Tughluq Sultan in Multan, 728 A.H., Bahādur Shah of Sonārgānw made a bid for the sovereignty of the whole of Bengal. The deposition of Nāsiruddin had left Bahādur as the only representative of the House of Firuz which could yet claim some loyal support from the people. Bahādur's rebellion is not noticed by any contemporary historian except Isāmi, who says: "When the Shah became free from that affair (of Kishlu Khan)...... and the army reached Dipālpur from Multan on the fifth day, there arrived one day a *paik* from Bahrām Khan to the Shah, joyous and happy. He uttered benedictions to the Shah after *zamin-bos* (prostration), and with arms crossed one above the other (over the chest), submitted, 'Shah *Purah* (*Bhurah,* Bahādur) who had deviated (*bargashtah*) from his allegiance, lies moistening the earth of Lakhnawati with his blood. Bahrām Khan led an army with all the chiefs in the direction of the river Khun (Jumnā of Mymensingh) and satiated the land with the flood of blood. That brave Khan by one single assault gave him defeat, and Bahādur after having sustained defeat turned his reins in the direction of a pool (*āb-gir*) and those who were flying threw themselves into a river...... The Khan, subduer of the world, chased them from behind, and Bahādur fell alive a captive into his hands. He killed him and flayed his skin...... The Khan has sent that skin as a wonderful message of victory to the fortunate Khusru (*i.e.* the Sultan)'...... Having heard this news the Shah ordered the drum of festivity to play, and merrymaking to go on for forty days...... He ordered that the undressed skin of Bahādur along with that of Bahrām (of Multan) be hung from the dome of victory."

Thus ended not ingloriously the career of Ghyāsuddin Bahādur Shah (popularly known as the *Bhurah*), and there remained none among the children of the soil to draw the sword again against Delhi for the independence of Bengal till the rise of Haji Ilyās Bhangra (*bhang*-eater), a decade after.

The three well-defined regions of Bengal, Lakhnawati, Sātgānw and Sonārgānw, were governed by Qadar Khan, Malik Izzuddin Yahayā, and Bahrām Khan *alias* Tātār Khan respectively, without any internal dissension or any attempt at rebellion against the authority of Sultan Muhammad Tughluq for about ten years more after the suppression of the last rebellion of Bahādur Shah. Bahrām Khan died at Sonārgānw in the year 738[1] A.H., according to the

[1] *Mubarakshahi,* p. 104. Thomas says that the date of the death of Bahrām Khan is to be pushed back to 737 A.H.; because a coin of Fakhruddin Mubarakshah

Tārikh-i-Mubārakshāhi (p. 104) presumably a natural death. *Riyaz* makes a confusion of Bahrām Khan with Qadar, and says that Fakhruddin the Armour-Bearer, killed his own master Qadar Khan. But Fakhruddin, as we learn from *Mubārakshāhi*, was not the Armour-Bearer of Qadar Khan but that of Bahrām Khan *alias* Tātār Khan, and it is not borne but by any reliable authority that Fakhruddin killed either his own master Bahrām Khan, or his enemy Qadar Khan. Fakhruddin was the right-hand man of Bahrām Khan, and it was only natural that he would assume the Government of Sonārgānw pending the appointment of a new governor by the Delhi Sultan. In the year 739 A.H. (a year after the death of Bahrām Khan), Fakhruddin rebelled in Sonārgānw and assumed the title of Sultan Fakhruddin *Mubārakshāh*. Immediately Qadar Khan, governor of Lakhnawati, Malik Husāmuddin Abu Raza, the *Mustaufi-ul-Mamalik*, Azam-ul-mulk Izzuddin Yahaya and Firuz Khan the son of Nusrat Khan *Amir* of Koh (-i-jud), marched against Fakhruddin, and after some fight defeated and expelled him from Sonārgānw, Fakhruddin fled perhaps to the other side of the Meghnā where his power was more firmly established.

After the expulsion of Fakhruddin from Sonārgānw Qadar Khan stayed on, and secured a large number of elephants besides the accumulated treasure of the eastern capital. After the campaign all the auxiliary chiefs returned to their fiefs, except Malik Abu Raza, the Mustaufi. Booty whetted the greed of Qadar Khan and he went on gathering spoils on the plea that the more he would secure the greater service he would be rendering to his master. Meanwhile the rainy season had begun, and most of his cavalry horses died. Abu Raza told him that it was only proper that the huge amount of treasure hitherto accumulated from estates far and near should be forwarded to the imperial treasury after giving the canonical share of the army to the soldiers. Qadar Khan overtaken by Fate would not do either, and turned a deaf ear to the good advice of Abu Raza. In the meantime Fakhruddin again appeared on the scene, and the discontented army out of their greed for wealth joined Fakhruddin and killed their master, Qadar Khan.

According to *Riyaz*, Qadar Khan ruled at Lakhnawati for fourteen years (text, p. 91), which is correct if we calculate the date of his appointment as the year of Muhammad Tughluq's accession (in 725 A.H.) and come down to the campaign of the imperial-

is read by him as dated 737 A.H. (*Chronicles*, 262). Mr. H. Nelson Wright puts the revolt of Fakhruddin in or about 1338 (739 A.H.) vide. Cat. Coins. II, p. 138. We prefer the latter authority.

ists against Fakhruddin in 739 A.H.,—both the dates resting on the testimony of the much earlier authority *Mubārakshāhi*. The vista of Fakhruddin's ambition widened with his unexpected success, and he sent a *ghulām* of his, Mukhlis, with an army to occupy Lakhnawati. Ali Mubarak, the *Ariz* or Paymaster of the forces of Qadar Khan, killed Mukhlis and established himself in authority at Lakhnawati. He sent the news of this victory to the Sultan, and begged for his own appointment as governor. But the Sultan overlooked his claim and sent Malik Yusuf, the *Shahnah* (police-prefect) of the city of Delhi as governor, who, however, died on the way,[1] and the Delhi sovereign neglected to fill the office.

Bengal cut itself adrift from the sinking wreck of Sultan Muhammad Tughluq's empire in or about 740 A.H. (1339-40 A.D.), and remained immune from any dreadful vengeance of the half-mad Sultan during the remaining twelve years of his reign. There is no truth in the story of Sultan Muhammad Tughluq's invasion of Bengal in 741 A.H. recorded by *Tārikh-i-Mubārak-shāhi,* because Fakhruddin who is said to have been killed by Sultan Muhammad Tughluq during this expedition, is found on reliable numismatic testimony to have been reigning in Sonārgānw as late as 750 A.H. if not later. Besides, had any such invasion taken place, there would have been a holocaust of all the usurping crowned heads in Bengal including Alauddin Ali Shāh and Hāji Ilyās.

APPENDIX A (CHRONOLOGY)

1. Bughra Khan visits Delhi. *c.* 685 A.H. (Nov. 1286).
2. Death of Balban. 686 A.H. (*Mubarakshahi,* 52) *c.* July 1287.
3. Accession of Kaiqubad. 686 A.H. (*Mubarakshahi, 52*; *Qiran-us-Sadain*).
4. Kaiqubad removes to Kilukhari.

Kilukhari was a village where now stands Humayun's Tomb. According to *Mubarakshahi* this occurred *six months* after Kaiqubad's accession. *Qiran* says that the Sultan came to Kilukhari on the 29th of Zilhijjah, and *Mubarakshahi* adds the year 686 A.H. (p. 53) on his expedition to Hindustan. So Balban's death and the accession of Kaiqubad must have happened about the middle of this year *i.e.* about July, 1287.

[1] *Mubarakshahi,* p. 105. We reject the account of Nizāmuddin Ahmad, a much later authority, regarding the affairs of Bengal about this time. Al Badayuni, Trans. i. 308.

5. Bughra assumes the title of Sultan Nāsiruddin Mahmud (686 A.H.). This must have been at least two months after the death of Balban, *i.e.*, about the close of the year 686 A.H. (*c.* September 1287). No history gives the date.

6. Nāsiruddin Mahmud occupies Bihar and prepares for an invasion of Delhi: 687 A.H. (Riyāz, 85). *Mubārakshāhi* says that the news of Mahmud's assumption of the title of Sultan and his contemplated march in the direction of Delhi reached Kaiqubad at Kilukhari. The date must be the beginning of 687, Feb. 1288.

7. Kaiqubad begins eastward march.

Middle of Rabi I. 687.[1] *C.* April, 1288 A.D.

8. March of the imperial army by way of Tilpat, Afghanpur and down the bank of the Jamuna *during the hot season.* May-June 1288 A.D.

9. Bengal army reaches the bank of the Sarju about this time. c. May, 1288.

10. Date of "meeting of the two Sultans" in the outskirts of Ajodhya—Rainy season (*Qiran*), 687 A.H.

11. Amir Khusru completes *Qiran-us-Sadain* in the month of Ramzan, 688 A.H.

12. Kaiqubad murdered: 19th Muharram 689 A.H. (*Mubarakshahi*, 59).

13. Sultan Nāsiruddin abdicates?

Riyāz says that after the accession of Jalāluddin Firuzshāh Khilji (Rabi. II. 689 A.H.; *ibid.* p. 61), Nāsiruddin "seeing no other alternative except to submit to Jalāluddin" discarded the prerogatives of royalty (p. 89). Bengal was a far cry yet for the usurper against whom the Balbani Amirs were in arms in modern U.P. So we take it to mean that Nāsiruddin only abdicated in favour of his son Kaiqaus sometime towards the close of the year 689 A.H.

14. Period of Nāsiruddin's rule in Bengal.

Banerjee very rightly rejects *Riyāz's* statement that Nāsiruddin Mahmud lived upto the time of Sultān Mubārakshāh Khilji of Delhi (accession. Sunday, 20th Muharram, 716 A.H.; *Mubārakshāhi*, p. 82). He accepts the other statement (that contradicts the previous one) that Nāsiruddin ruled *for six years* as given by *Riyāz*. We, however, accept Banerjee's tentative chronology that Nāsiruddin ruled for six years (681-86 A.H.) as Governor and six years more (686-91 A.H.) as Sultan. Mr. Stapleton (JASB. New Series. Vol. XVIII, 1922; p. 407 ff.) gives him 7 or 8 years from

[1] Cowell is wrong in assuming the year as 686 A.H. (JASB. 1860; *Qiran-us-Sadain*, p. 230, footnote).

c. 682 A.H. There cannot be any doubt regarding the fact that Nāsiruddin ceased to reign in or before 690 A.H. ; because his son Ruknuddin Kaiqaus struck a coin in that year *out of the Khiraj of Bang* (*ibid,* p. 410).

Balban left Bengal in charge of Bughra when the Sultan started for Delhi (*vide* Chapter II. ante), perhaps in 681 A.H. So Banerjee is more correct than Mr. Stapleton in dating Bughra Khan's governorship from 681 A.H. So the chronology stands as follows :

(*i*) Bughra Khan's viceroyalty of Bengal *c.* 681 A.H. to 686 A.H. (Banerjee, *Bangalar Itihas* ii, 77).

(*ii*) Independent rule of Nāsiruddin. 686-690 A.H.

The *six years* of Riyaz remains inexplicable unless we take it to mean the period of Bughra's viceroyalty.

15. Reign of Sultan Ruknuddin Kaiqaus *c.* 690 A.H. to 701 A.H. (1291-1301 A.D.).

The coins and inscriptions of Kaiqaus prove with absolute certainty that he reigned at least from 690 A.H. to 698 A.H. The period between 698 A.H. to 701 A.H. is still dark and uncertain. Future discovery of coins may however push the upward limit of the reign of Sultan Shamsuddin Firuz, the successor of Kaiqaus, who was perhaps dethroned or killed about 698 A.H.

16. Sultan Shamsuddin Firuz (Dehlavi). (701-722 A.H. *c.* 1301-22 A.D.).

Mr. Banerjee and Mr. Stapleton (the latest authority on this period) are in substantial agreement regarding the chronology of the reign of Sultan Shamsuddin Firuz. We have, however, reasons to differ from all authorities from Thomas down to Stapleton who, on the very doubtful testimony of Ibn Batuta, maintain firmly that Firuz was 'the *son* of Sultan Nāsiruddin Mahmud.' Our own view is that, this Firuz was the same man as the great Khan *Firuz Aitigin as-Sultani* of the Kaiqaus inscription of Lakhisarai (Monghyr) who usurped the throne of Lakhnawati between the years 698-701 A.H. It is not unlikely that this usurper was one of the two *Firuz*-es whom Balban had left behind in Bengal to serve under Bughra Khan. (*i*) Shamsuddin Firuzshah is the *first* and the only one among the successors of Ruknuddin Kaiqaus who does not designate himself *Sultan* bin-sultan. Ruknuddin claimed justly for himself the distinction of being *Sultan bin Sultan bin Sultan.* Had Firuz been the younger brother of Kaiqaus there is no valid reason why he should not follow suit. There is no force in the argument of Thomas that Firuz "felt himself sufficiently firm in his own power to discard the supererogatory adjuncts of descent or relationship"

(*Chronicle* p. 193). The power of Firuz was so weak that all his sons rebelled against him and styled themselves *Sultan bin Sultan*. Royal descent was too proud a privilege to be discarded easily. If Firuz had been the *son* of a Sultan his sons Bahādur, Bughdah Khan and Ibrahim would have surely added a second *bin-Sultan* to their title as Kaiqaus did.

Blochmann first noticed this omission of *bin-Sultan* after the name of Firuz, but he did not push his doubt further. Amir Khusru does not mention any other son of Nāsiruddin Mahmud except Kaiqaus who could not have been older than sixteen or seventeen in 687 A.H. (date of interview) as his elder brother Kaiqubad was only nineteen at that time according to Barani. So Firuz if younger to Kaiqaus could hardly be more than fourteen in 687 A.H. and only about thirtysix years in 710 A.H. when Jalāluddin and Bahādur rose against their father. This is absurd because if Firuz were thirty-six, his sons could not have been more than sixteen—too raw an age for revolt.

Another fact to be noticed in this connection is that in the Sylhet inscription (dated 918) Shamsuddin Firuz is designated *Dehlavi* (*i.e.*, from Delhi).

There is no example either in coin legend on inscription where a Sultan of Delhi or a descendant of any Sultan of Delhi has ever been designated Dehlavi. Mr. Stapleton has unfortunately lent the weight of his authority to this wrong interpretation of the word *Dehlavi* (JASB. Vol. XVIII, 1922, p. 413). However, a young scholar has critically discussed all the relevant authorities and independently arrived at the same conclusions as mine (*Indian Historical Quarterly*, Vol. XVIII, No. 1, 1942; p. 65 ff.).

Our reading of the facts has been embodied in the text.

CHAPTER IV

RISE OF THE ILYĀS SHĀHI DYNASTY

I. OBSCURE HISTORY OF THE LAST YEARS OF TUGHLUQ PARAMOUNTCY IN BENGAL

For the history of Bengal during the fifteen year 739-753 A.H. (1338-52) our only safe authority is the Bengal coinage. The literary sources, even when contemporary like Zia Barani (*Tārikh-i-Firuz Shāhi*) and Ibn Batuta (*Travels*), or later like the *Tārikh-i-Mubārak Shāhi* (c. 1434) and *Tabaqat-i-Akbari* (c. 1589)', not to speak of the very modern and traditional *Riyāz-us-Salātin* (1788), contradict each other and are in many places patently incorrect. They were all written far away from this neglected frontier province. But even the coins of the Sultans who then reigned, as a consequence of their clipped margins, paucity of number and clumsy sprawling style of writing, have only given birth to barren controversy among modern scholars who differ widely in their conjectural reading of the dates on them. These dates are stamped in Arabic *words* and not in numerals, and very often owing to bad marginal deletions only an illegible lower fragment of the unit is all that is left on a decisive coin. It is only by placing side by side all the coins of a particular Sultan and carefully restoring the mutilated date-words of one coin from a less imperfect one, that the length of his reign can be correctly ascertained. Dr. N. K. Bhattasali is the only scholar who has made such a comparative study by inspecting the coin-cabinets of Calcutta, Shillong and Dacca ;—but even he has not been able to see the specimens in the British Museum or exact facsimiles of them. He is also our most recent worker on this special period.

Earlier numismatists who could not make such a comparative study,—and who probably paid less meticulous attention to the reading, arrived at dates on coins which differ from Bhattasali's and which led them naturally to reconstruct the history of Bengal during these years in a shape entirely different from his.

Dr. Bhattasali's chronological scheme derived from his reading of the coin-dates appeals to me as the best "working hypothesis" for the history of this period and has been adopted here, as it is likely to hold the field till corrected by the fresh unearthing of coins in India or a thorough examination of those in London. The history thus reconstructed is as follows :

Bahrām Khan (originally named Tātār Kh.) the governor of East Bengal on behalf of the Tughluq Emperor, died in 739 A.H. (1338 A.D.), when his servant Fakhr-ud-din took possession of his seat (Sonārgānw) and continued to rule that portion of Bengal till his death in 750. He assumed the title of Fakhruddin Mubārak Shāh and all his coins were issued from the Sonārgānw mint and cover every year from 740 to 750, (the date of only one is conjectured to be 739). He had naturally wars of aggression and defence with the governor of *West* Bengal, but never established his rule over that half of Bengal, as not a single coin of his bears the mint-name of Firuzabad (*i.e.*, Pandua, to which the capital had been shifted from Lakhnawati).

This series of coins was continued from Sonārgānw mint by a ruler named Ikhtiyār-ud-din Ghāzi Shāh (most probably a son of Fakhruddin) for the years 750 to 753, after which last date, East Bengal was annexed to West Bengal by Ilyās Shāh.

During the reigns of these two rulers of Sonārgānw, the government of *West* Bengal was held, first by Qadar Khan, a viceroy of the Tughluq Emperor, who died in 742 A.H.,—having been killed by his own corrupted soldiers during the chronic struggle with East Bengal, as the tradition goes. After him came Ali Mubārak, the army-chief of Qadar, who took the title of Alauddin Ali Shāh, and reigned for one year and five months, as his coins bear the dates 742 and 743 only. Finally, Ilyās, an officer (or according to the gossipy *Riyāz*, the foster-brother) of Ali, murdered his patron and seized the throne of *West* Bengal, late in 743 A.H. By conquering *East* Bengal in 753, (the date of his first coin from Sonārgānw), he united the two halves of Bengal and reigned till 758 A.H. (after which year his coins cease).

Edward Thomas (writing in 1847 and 1851 and on the basis of what Bhattasali regards as a misreading of coin-dates) antedated Ilyās's accession and inferred three years of disputed possession of West Bengal between him and Ali Shah. He, however, writes with judicial caution : "The coins . . . disclose apparent anomalies. Medallic testimony would seem to indicate a long waging of hostile interests between Ali Shah and Haji Ilyās before the latter attained his final local triumph; for although Iliyās is seen to have coined money in Firuzabad in 740 A.H., the chance seems to have been denied to him in 741 ; and in 742 his adversary Ali Shah is found in full possession of the mint in question. The Kuch Bihar hoard reveals no coin of either party dated 743, but in 744 the two again compete for ownership, which Ali Shah for the time being continues through 745 into 746, when the annual

series is taken up and carried on successively for an uninterrupted twelve years by his more favoured opponent" (*i.e.*, Ilyās).

Bhattasali's conclusion that no coin of Ali Shah is really dated after 743 and no coin of Ilyās before 744, at least resolves the "apparent anomalies," by denying their existence.

J. SARKAR.

II. CONDITION OF BENGAL DURING 1325-53 A.D.

In the intervening space between the Rajmahal and the Garo hills, between the downs of Birbhum and the hills of Tipperah, there stretches a boundless tract of level plains fringed by the Himalayas on the north and washed by the Bay of Bengal on the south. Watered by an intricate net-work of streams and channels, this vast expanse of land is shaped roughly like a triangle. Taking Jalpaiguri below the Terai as its apex, its left arm extends through English Bazar (Malda) and Bankura to Balasore on the sea-coast and the right arm through Rangpur and Dacca to Chittagong on the sea-coast of the Bay of Bengal. This alluvial tract which equals in area England and Scotland put together has been carved into three parts by the Ganges and the Jamuna. Flowing south-west, the Ganges cuts the province through its heart, while the local Jamuna that carries the waters of the Brahmaputra down to the Ganges fences off the north-eastern part to form a separate region known as Eastern Bengal.

When Muhammad bin Tughluq began his reign in 1328 A.D. he made a political division of Bengal into three separate parts, corresponding to its physical divisions. Lakhnawati was placed in charge of Malik Pindar Khilji whom the Sultan honoured with the title of Qadar Khan; Hisāmuddin Abu Razā was associated with him as the wazier. Sātgānw was assigned to Izzuddin Yahiya who was created Azam-ul-Mulk; while Sonārgānw was entrusted to the Sultan's half-brother Tātār Khan, entitled Bahrām Khan, and Bahādur Shah, who was liberated from his captivity, on his pledging to remain loyal to the Sultan and to send his son Muhammad *alias* Barbat as a hostage to the Delhi court.[1]

This arrangement worked smoothly for a few years. At first Bahādur Shah made acknowledgment of his allegiance to the Sultan of Delhi on his coins, but he evaded the despatch of his son to Delhi; and in 729 A.H./1328 A.D., *he* asserted his independence by

[1] Zia Barani, (B.I.) p. 461, T.M.S. (B.I.) p. 98, Def & Sang. III, pp. 316-17.

striking coins in his own name.[1] He was, however, resisted by his co-adjutor in administration Bahrām Khan who, reinforced by troops from Delhi under Diljai Tatar, met him in battle. In the contest that followed Bahādur was defeated and fled, but while he was flying away his horse stuck deep into the mire and he was taken captive. At the Sultan's order he was flayed alive and his skin stuffed with straw was made into an effigy, shown round the various parts of the empire, and then hung from the battlements of the fortress of Delhi as a warning to all rebels.[2] After the suppression of Bahādur's rebellion, Bahrām Khan became the sole governor of Sonārgānw; he held this post till his death in 1337-38 A.D., when his armour-bearer Fakhruddin seized the throne and asserted his independence under the title of Fakhruddin Mubarak Shah.

The assumption of independence by Fakhruddin once again set Eastern Bengal ablaze; Izzuddin Yahiya, and Qadar Khan, feoffees of Sātgānw and Lakhnawati respectively became united in arms and being reinforced by Firuz Khan, Amir of Kara, marched to Sonārgānw to crush the rebel. Fakhruddin was obliged to give them battle, but he was defeated and compelled to withdraw from his capital with his forces. Sonārgānw thus passed again under the yoke of Delhi; Qadar Khan took charge of it while the other feoffees went back to their respective fiefs.

Like the ever-shifting course of its streams, affairs in the eastern capital often took bewildering turns. So it transpired after the triumph of Qadar Khan. Master of Lakhnawati and Sonārgānw, he was confident of a long tenure of power, but hardly had a year elapsed when he was swept off his throne.

Such a dramatic event was brought about by Qadar Khan's impolicy and the peculiar geography of Sonārgānw. Greedy and covetous, Qadar Khan appropriated to himself, all the wealth and treasures that had fallen into his hands at Sonārgānw, refusing the soldiery any share of the booty. He thus exasperated his own troops and made matter worse for himself by his failure to maintain his line of communications with the west.

When the rains burst, Fakhruddin issuing out of his retreat besieged Qadar Khan by water. Unused to the damp soil and vapoury heat of the eastern capital, the troops and horses of Qadar Khan perished in large numbers, while those who survived the epidemic faced extinction at the hands of Fakhruddin. They therefore made common cause with him, rose against Qadar Khan

[1] Initial Coinage, p. 55, JASB, Nus. Cupp. XXXV, pp. 152-53.

[2] Fatuh-us-Salatin, p. 428. Def & Sang. p. 317.

and assassinated him.[1] The kaleidoscope was given another turn and Fakhruddin was acknowledged again as the master of Sonārgānw.

The murder of Qadar Khan and the defection of his troops soon brought in their train the surrender of Lakhnawati, for his deputy Mukhlis was slain by Ali Mubarak, general of Qadar Khan. At first the latter acknowledged his allegiance to Delhi, made repeated reprsentations for the early despatch of an imperial representative to Lakhnawati, but the sudden death of Malik Yusuf, the Sultan's nominee for the post at Delhi and widespread rebellion all over the empire, so embarrassed the Tughluq Sultan that he was obliged to leave Lakhnawati to its fate. Ali Mubarak therefore took up royal titles and began his reign at Lakhnawati under the title of Alauddin Ali Shah about 1339 A.D. He did not long remain in peace, for his foster-brother Ilyās who arrived from Delhi at this time entered into a contest with him for the throne of Lakhnawati[2] but worsted in the fight, retired to South Bengal where he carved out an independent kingdom, issuing coins in his name from 743 A.H., onwards.[3] Bengal was thus broken up again into three parts, with Fakhruddin, Ilyās and Ali Shah ruling respectively in the eastern, southern and western parts. According to Ibn Batuta, the contest for supremacy was very bitter between Ali Shah and Fakhruddin who retaliated attacks on Eastern Bengal during the winter by invading Lakhnawati during the rains. Ali Shah is said to have been the builder of the sumptuous mosque at Pandua erected inside the cemetry of Shaikh Jalāluddin Tabrizi, but as the Shaikh's dath occurred in 1244 A.D., nearly a century before the reign of Ali Shah, the erection of the mosque had presumably taken place earlier and may not be justly ascribed to him. Ali Shah reigned till 743 A.H./1342 A.D., when he either died or was slain by his brother Ilyās Shah. His rival Fakhruddin continued his rule in Sonārgānw for a few years more, pushing his arms to the south until Chittagong was annexed to his territory. The Sultan connected this outpost of Muslim power situated in the remote south-eastern corner of India with a road running from Chandpur opposite Sripur and adorned the city with mosques and tombs.[4] In 750/1349 A.D. he was succeeded most probably by his son who assumed the royal title of Ikhtiyaruddin

[1] T.M.S., pp. 104-5.

[2] Supplement to I.M.C. II, 1939, by S. Ahmed, p. 39.

[3] Shillong Sup. Cat. pp. 120, initial coinage, p. 62. JNMSI, p, 68, which refers to an ins. mentioning the erection of a mosque in 743 A.H. by 'Sultan' Ilyās Shah.

[4] Sarkar's Studies in Mughal India, 1919, p. 122.

Ghazi Shah and issued coins from Sonārgānw in 750 and 753 A.H., in which year he was ousted by Ilyās Shah. During Fakhruddin's reign the Moorish traveller Ibn Batuta visited Bengal, (1345-46 A.D.) and from his account we get a very intimate knowledge of the life of the people in this province.

III. Bengal as seen by Ibn Batuta

During the reign of Fakhruddin a Muhammadan saint of great renown and sanctity had taken up his abode in the town of Sylhet. Belonging to the tribe of Qureish, he is said to have migrated to India to carry on religious propaganda. After an interview with Shaikh Nizamuddin Awliya at Ghiyaspur, he proceeded eastward till he came to the eastern limits of India and chose Sylhet as the centre of his missionary activities.[1] A tall, slim man with lean cheeks, he had practised austerities and mortification for years and gained many converts to Islam from among the local population. A cave of the low hill nearby was the favourite seat of his prayer. He used to fast for ten days together and then break it on the eleventh day with the milk of a cow which was his only possession. All night long he would remain standing in prayer. Such strange practices naturally set afloat curious stories of miracles performed by him. As Ibn Batuta relates, the Shaikh said his prayers in Mecca every morning, being present in his cell for the rest of the day and was present in Mecca every year on the occasion of the Id. Ibn Batuta had long been consumed with a desire to have a sight of the Shaikh. So he made a detour round Bengal in his voyage to China. He entered the province through the estuary of the Hughly and passing by Sātgānw,[2] a great port situated on the sea-coast, proceeded, direct to Sylhet. After a three-day halt in the

[1] JASB, 1873, pp. 278-80.

[2] Def. & Sang., vol. IV, pp. 217-221. That Ibn Batuta entered Bengal through the port of Sātgānw admits of no doubt. The traveller's own statements dissipate all misgivings on this point, firstly he says that it lay near the confluence of the Ganges and the Jamuna where the Hindus went on pilgrimage and was situated on the sea-coast. Secondly in stating the name of the place, he lays stress on the word Sin and Jim which would have been the case if Chatigaon (Chittagong) was meant. That the Ganges and the Jamuna united near Sātgānw and not near Chittagong is borne out by Abul Fazl. Jarrett, vol. II, pp. 120-21. Again, Chittagong was situated inland, off the sea-coast and could not obviously be the base from which Fakhruddin sailed out in summer with his flotilla for an attack upon Lakhnawati as stated by Ibn Batuta. So, the contention of Sudkawan being Chatigaon holds little water.

hospice of the saint, he voyaged down the river to Sonārgānw where he boarded a vessel bound for Java. The traveller's journey to Sylhet and back to Sonārgānw therefore took him round large areas of Eastern Bengal and those aspects in the life and condition of the people which struck him most were recorded in his itinerary. The African globe-trotter had passed through civilized and prosperous hubs of humanity in Africa and Asia, visited Cairo, Basrah, Shiraz Isfahan and Pekin travelled through Bukhara, Samarqand, Tirmiz, Balkh and Herat in Afghanistan, but nowhere else in the world had he seen such low prices and such comfortable abundance of rice as he did in Bengal. And the prices of certain commodities jotted down by him would amply show how Bengal was a paradise of plenty in that age.

The current prices noted by the traveller were no doubt based on the weight of the Delhi *ratl,* but as according to the calculations of Yule and Thomas, the Delhi *ratl* (part of a maund) was equivalent in weight to 28·8 lb. avoirdupois, a valuation of the current prices in terms of the present standard of weight may be drawn up, but if this has to be translated in terms of modern money two different tables of prices have to be drawn up, according as gold or silver is accepted as the standard. If gold is taken as the standard, one silver dinar of Ibn Batuta would be equal to approximately Rs. 7 of the present time ; if silver is adopted as the standard, a silver dinar would be equal to the modern Rupee, because the old ratio between gold and silver 1:10 has changed to 1:70 at present, thereby marking a definite lowering down in the price of silver in terms of gold. It may be mentioned that a comparison between the prices of commodities at the time of Ibn Batuta with those of our times would not be accurate and scientific, as we have no sufficient data to draw up the index numbers of the different periods on which a real comparison could be based, but as the prices mentioned by Ibn Batuta would have no meaning without their relation to their present value, a computation of prices in terms of modern money becomes a desideratum. True, the gold currency was of limited circulation under the Muslim Sultans of Bengal but gold being the international medium of exchange, any computation of prices should be made in terms of the yellow metal. Accordingly the following table may be drawn up :

Rice approximately	8¾ mds.	(25	Delhi ratl)	at Rs.		7
Paddy	,,	28 ,,	80	,,	,,	7
Ghee	,,	14 srs.	1	,,	,,	3-8 as.
Sesame oil	,,	14 ,,	1	,,	,,	1-12 ,,
Rose water	,, ..	14 ,,	1	,,	,,	7

Sugar approximately 14 srs. (1 Delhi ratl)	at Rs.	3-8 as.
8 fat fowls	„	14 „
1 fat ram	„	1-12 „
1 milch cow	„	21
15 pigeons	„	14 „

The price of staple articles tabulated above was regarded by the inhabitants of Bengal as too high for them with reference to the usual rates. Cotton fabrics of the finest texture, 15 yds. in length were sold at Rs. 14, a handsome young concubine was sold in the presence of Ibn Batuta at Rs. 70. Ibn Batuta himself purchased at almost the same price a young slave maid of exquisit beauty named Ashurah, while one of his attendants bought a young page at approximately Rs. 140. A Moroccan named Muhammad-al-Masudi who had lived in Bengal with his wife and a servant for sometime, related to Ibn Batuta that food-stuffs sufficient for their sustenance for the whole year were purchased at Rs. 7 only.[1] Another point of interest in Ibn Batuta's narrative is the reference to mendicants and sufis who had made the province a centre of active religious propaganda. As early as 1281 A.D. the head of Qalandari order in Lakhnawati had egged on Tughril to rebel against the Sultan of Delhi and had received from the former a gift of three maunds of gold with which the iron bracelets and anklets worn by the members of this order were replaced with gold ones.[2] During Fakhruddin's reign, the faqirs enjoyed various privileges. They travelled by boat free of any charges, provisions were supplied to those who needed them and when they appeared in a town they were received with the gift of half-a-dinar.

Sultan Fakhruddin's boundless devotion to the faqirs led him to appoint one of them named Shayda in charge of Sātgānw during his absence; but the latter betrayed the trust by rebelling against him and murdering the Sultan's only son. Fakhruddin promptly arrived on the scene and quelled the rebellion; Shayda fled with his following to Sonārgānw, but the people of the place in fear of their lives put him and his accomplices under arrest and delivered them into the hands of the Sultan's men. Shayda was decapitated, his head being presented to the Sultan, at his own orders.

The lot of the Hindu population in Fakhruddin's time was not very enviable, for "they are mulcted," says Ibn Batuta, "of half of their crops and have to pay taxes over and above that." Traffic

[1] Gibb's Ibn Batuta, p. 267. Def & Sang, vol. IV, pp. 210-11, cf. Eng. trans. in "Coins and chronology of the Early Sultans of Bengal" by Dr. N. K. Bhattasali, pp. 135-36.

[2] Zia Barani, p. 91.

was carried on mainly by the highway of the rivers, the boats possibly moving in convoys, for the traveller says "There are innumerable vessels on its rivers, and each vessel carries a drum ; when vessels meet, each of them beats a drum and they salute one another"—a precaution adopted probably to guard against piracy.[1]

Native of a bleak parched upland, resident for many years in arid Delhi, the traveller was enamoured of the picturesque landscape of Eastern Bengal. "The wealth of green in every possible shade" from the deepest of olives to the tender green of the earliest rice, the variegated scenes such as the homesteads and market-centre that unfolded before him at every turn of the river, like the shifting scenes in a kaleidoscope, threw the traveller into rapture, and he burst out saying, "we travelled down the river for fifteen days (from Sylhet to Sonārgānw) between villages and orchards just as if we were going through a bazar. On its banks there are water wheels, orchards and villāges to right and left, like those of the Nile in Egypt." Thus while the abundance of the necessaries of life and its soothing scenery made it a very attractive country to live in, the "vapour bath," particularly the steaming exhalation from the creeks and inlets during the summer, were so oppressive that westerners called it *dozaki-i-pur niamat* (a hell crammed with blessings).

IV. Sultan Shamsuddin Ilyās Shah
1342-1357 A.D. (743-758 A.H.)

A new chapter was opened in the history of Bengal, with the accession of Ilyās Shah to the throne of Lakhnawati, under the title of Shamsuddin Ilyās Shah, in 743 A.H. (1342 A.D.).

The whole of northern India was at that time in a state of turmoil owing to the violence and caprices of the Delhi Emperor Muhammad bin Tughluq. The Hindu chiefs to the east of Allahabad and Bahraich, *e.g.*, the Rajas of Gorakhpur, Champaran and Tirhut, had thrown off their allegiance and become practically independent. But there was no unity among them. The extinction of the Delhi Sultan's authority and the absence of union among the Hindu Rajas encouraged Ilyās Shah to turn his arms against the west.

The first kingdom to feel the weight of his arm was Tirhut, then torn by internal discord. If Bendall and Grierson are to be relied upon, this kingdom was divided between two rival kings, Sakti Sinh, grandson of Harisinh Deva, holding court at Simraon, (26. 10 N. 85. 53 E.) and Kamesvara, the nominee of Sultan Ghiyā-

[1] Gibb's Ibn Batuta, p. 271.

suddin Tughluq, at Sugaon, near Madhubani, in Darbhanga district.[1] Ilyās had not therefore much difficulty in conquering this kingdom.

The subjugation of Tirhut was followed by a very daring incursion into Nepal in 1346 A.D. What incentives led him to this expedition and by what routes the Bengal army climbed into the valley of Katmandu, are not known. It is a fact, however, that when the Bengal Sultan burst into this kingdom, he encountered little opposition ; neither the king Jayrājdeva nor his minister Jayasthitimala, came out with their forces, to defend the sanctity of their temple. Ilyās therefore marched to the city of Katmandu, burnt and destroyed the holy Swayambhunāth Stupa and the sacred standard of Sākyamuni.[2] He did not stay long in the capital, though Dr. Jayaswal holds that he did, on the very weak ground that there was a draw upon the treasury of Lord Pashupati in 1347 A.D., which in his opinion was necessitated by the long-drawn hostilities with Ilyās Shah. Katmandu, however, with its hills, crags and stocky population could not certainly be an inducement to the soldiers of the plains, to make a prolonged stay for the display of their fighting qualities.

These dazzling successes emboldened Ilyās Shah to make another spectacular display of his arms. To the south-west of Bengal there extends along the sea-board from the Suvarnarekhā to the Godāvari, a long stretch of flat alluvial plain, with a hinterland of undulating tract. This country had grown into a highly prosperous kingdom during the 13th and 14th centuries. Its wealth and myriads of temples, *e.g.*, of Meghesvara Balaram, Krishna and Subhadra at Ekamra, (modern Bhuvanesvara), Catesvara at Kishanpur in the Padamtala taluk of the Cuttack district, of the Sun-god at Konarak and of Jagannath at Puri, had long excited the cupidity of the Muslim sultans of Bengal. But the arms of its rulers, especially Anangabhim III, Narasinha I and Narasinha II gave it security against invasion for a century and a quarter.[3]

About the middle of the 14th century A.D., however, the gateway into this kingdom of fabled prosperity which had not been previously pierced by any Turkish war-lord of Bengal, was burst open by Ilyās Shah. He swept away all opposition, marched across the country

[1] Bendall's History of Nepal and surrounding kingdoms, JASB. vol. LXXII, part I, 1903 and Grierson's notes on Medieval poets and kings of Mithila. *Ind. Ant,* vol. XIV, 1885, p. 192 & p. 57, vide also *History of Tirhut,* by Shyamnarain Sinha, (Baptist Mission Press), 1922.

[2] JBORS, 1936 pp. 81-91.

[3] *Dynastic History of Northern India* by Dr. H. C. Roy, vol. I, pp. 478-487,

to the Lake Chilkā where the terror of his arms had driven the aristocracy of Orissa, and came back with immense booty including 44 elephants. These conquests emboldened him to extend his arms beyond Tirhut to Champāran and Gorakhpur, whose Rajas transferred their allegiance to him. His authority in this region was established by two successive visits to the shrine of Sipahsalar Shaikh Masud Ghazi at Bahraich, while to the south of these territories, the Sultan's dominion was extended as far as Benares.

These sweeping conquests effected with startling rapidity fired the imagination of the Bengal Sultan and visions of imperial suzerainty hovered before his eyes. *Sirat-i-Firuz Shahi,* a contemporary chronicle, represents the exultant mood of the Sultan (on his return to Lakhnawati from Bahraich and Benares) in these vivid word "Ah ! Ah ! what a fine thing it would have been if with such plenitude of strength and resources, army and fleet, I had pushed to the city of Delhi (instead of going to Bahraich) and paid my respects to Shaikh-ul-Islam Nizamuddin. Who could then have dared to oppose me and my forces ?" (P. 36).

In 1353 A.D. he further strengthened his position by the overthrow of the son of Fakhruddin Mubārak Shāh, the rival Sultan of Sonārgānw. But hardly had a year elapsed when these high aspirations proved not only to be a vain illusion but even his very conquests melted away. This unexpected turn in his fortune was caused by the rise of a new master in Delhi, Sultan Firuz who quickly set his kingdom in order and got ready by the close of November, 1353 A.D.[1] to measure swords with Sultan Ilyās.

[1] It has been accepted by all writers on the history of Bengal that the Sultan started on the expedition against Lakhnawati, in Shawwal, 754 A.H. (*Nov.* 1353 A.D.) and returned to Delhi in Shaban 755 A.H. (June 1354 A.D.). This chronology is furnished by Zia Barani whose account was reproduced by all later chroniclers *e.g.* Yahiya Sarhindi, Nizāmuddin Ahmad and Firishta. According to them, the entire campaign covered only ten months or so. The other contemporary authority Afif, on the other hand says, (TFS, p. 124) that the outward march to Lakhnawati and Ekdala, took eleven months; the return journey too occupying an equivalent period. Afif's statement is more trustworthy for this was not merely a campaign against Lakhnawati, but a reconquest of the Gangetic Doab and the territory extending from Oudh to the Kusi. In course of the outward march, the chiefs of Gorakhpur, Karusha and Tirhut were subjugated; arrangements were made for the administration of the territory, stretching from the Sarju to the Kusi; and operations were carried on against the fort of Ekdala. The return journey of Firuz was equally eventful; he consolidated his authority in the Doab, by marching through Kara-Manikpur, Koil, Jhajar and Qabulpur. How could so many enterprises in the course of such a distant campaign, be undertaken in ten months or so? That the campaign covered a period of more than two years is also indirectly supported by

V. Firuz Shāh Tughluq invades Bengal

Firuz mobilised a huge army ; 90,000 cavalry, a very large body of infantry and archers and a flotilla of a thousand boats. This mighty force was led across the Doab to Oudh, where its progress across the Gogra was intercepted by the Bengali army and fleet, but the Bengalis were out-matched and had to fall back. The Delhi army now burst into the kingdoms of Gorakhpur and Champaran, while its fleet followed it down the river. If Afif is to be trusted, the Bengali fleet came forward to oppose it at every convenient point, such as the confluence of the Gogra and the Ganges, the Gandak and the Ganges, but it had to give way at each of the places and finally to retire to the Kusi along with the army. Here they made a very determined stand and all the efforts of Sultan Firuz to dislodge them were futile.

The emperor of Delhi was not, however, a man to be easily baulked by his adversary. He hit upon an adroit manœuvre to circumvent his opponent. Far to the north near the present borders of Nepal, at a place called Jiāran, the river Kusi narrows down to a rushing mountain torrent, being easily fordable. Resolved to take the enemy in the rear, the Sultan led the bulk of his troops to this point and being assisted by the local Raja, safely got them across the river. Threatened with encirclement, the Bengalis quitted their encampment on the Kusi and retreated down the Ganges.

Meanwhile the Delhi army, after fording the Kusi, headed straight for Pandua alias Firuzabad, the capital of Bengal. An unprotected city, situated six miles off from the confluence of the Mahānandā and the Kālindri and eleven miles from the modern English Bazar, it had been evacuated by Ilyās Shah and was therefore easily captured by the spearhead of the Delhi army.

Master of the capital, Sultan Firuz issued double proclamations, one guaranteeing the life and property of the inhabitants of the city of Firuzabad and the other denouncing Ilyās Shah as a rebel and a tyrant for his transgression of the laws of Islam and slaughter of women, and calling upon the people of Bengal to dissociate themselves from him and to rally round the Emperor's standard. Firuz coupled these appeals to moral sentiment with an alluring offer of material advancement ; the bait of increased grants of land, stipends

an inscription engraved on a tomb in Bihar dated 19th Zilhijjah,, 753 A.H. in which Sultan Firuz is acknowledged as the ruler of the place, Epigraphia Indica, vol. II, p. 292). It would therefore be more reasonable to hold that the campaign began in 753 A.H. and ended in Shaban 755 A.H.

and allowances was held out to the Muslim doctors and the nobility; the remission of the current year's revenue and reversion to the land-revenue system of Sultan Shamsuddin of Bengal were promised to the *muqaddams,* and the captains of *paiks* were offered a cent per cent increase in their fiefs and allowances on their joining with their full contingents, or an increase of fifty per cent on their bringing up only one half, and the confirmation of their existing lands and stipends, on their coming singly.

In the Dhanjar Pargana of the Dinajpur district, the rivers Baliya and Chirāmati, tributaries of the Mahānandā, flowing southward, take the shape of the prongs of a pincer. Inside the curve lies the village of Ekdala,[1] which had been fortified by Ilyās Shāh with massive ramparts, made of adhesive clay peculiar to the locality and by a sixty feet wide moat running round it.[2] It was built on so vast

[1] Afif, TFS, 110-115, 160. SFS, p. 45 says that the fort of Ekdala was enclosed by an arm of the Ganges. According to Afif Ekdala was an island p. 112, 149. According to Zia Barani, p. 589, Ekdala had water on one side and jungle on the other. At one time the position of Ekdala was a moot point among the scholars. Westmacott identified it with a village of the same name in the Dhanjar Pargana of Dinajpur district. According to this view, it lay about 23 miles north of Pandua in Malda district, 42 miles north of Gaur, 15 miles west of Ghoraghat on the Malda side of the river Tangan (JASB, 1874, pp. 244-45) Raverty in Eng. tr. of Tabaqat-i-Nasiri, BIS, p. 591, f. n. held it to be no other place than Devkot (near Gangarampur) in Dinajpur district. Beveridge again identified it with a place of the same name in Dacca district (JASB, 1895, part I, p. 213). This view was indirectly supported by Sir Wolseley Haig who in CHI, vol. III, p. 176, held that Ekdala was a village situated on islands in the Brahmaputra and protected by the dense jungle which clothed the river banks. Khan Sahib Abid Ali on the other hand held it to be the old fort of Bisankot or Kalapahar Garhi at Murcha which was built by Ghiyasuddin Iwaz and is eight miles west of Pandua (Memoirs of Pandua, p. 23). Many of these conjectures are wide of the mark, in view of Afif's statement that Ilyās Shah after sallying out of the fort, overtook Sultan Firuz at a distance of only 14 miles. It is thus quite clear that Ekdala was situated neither to the west of Pandua nor on an island in Dacca district. Of late Westmacott's view holds the field, for H. E. Stapleton who made a careful study of the topography of the present site of Ekdala also arrived at the conclusion that this was the place where the Sultans of Bengal held out. He expressed this view in a paper read before the Royal Asiatic Society of London in 1934, and stated that Ekdala occupied an area of about 25 miles in the present Dinajpur district and was enclosed within a broad moat which was formed by linking up the Chiramati and Baliya rivers by canals. The site of the battle between Shamsuddin Ilyās and the Delhi Sultan must have been the plain that stretches to the south of the southern moat for ten or twelve miles, almost to the present boundary of Malda district (Report in the Times of India, 24th April, 1934). Quoted from Studies from Indo-Muslim History by Professor Hodiwala, p. 312.

[2] Zia Barani, pp. 590-1, Afif, p. 111.

a scale that it accommodated not only all the forces of Ilyās Shah but practically the entire aristocracy of the capital and their families. But the singular feature that made the fortress a curious sight to the Muslims of Upper India, was its situation behind double enclosures of water, so that, it presented the spectacle of being situated on an island, *Jajair-i-Ekdala.* The advance of Sultan Firuz to the neighbourhood of this fortress and the fortification of his camp with a wooden stockade and a trench were followed by the flare-up of hostilities. Catapults which were erected kept up an incessant shower of stones and other missiles on the enemy's fort. Skirmishes occurred between the patrols, but the Bengali Sultan entrenched behind double barriers of water could not be got at. In the meantime, the Delhi troops were subjected to many discomforts; they were herded together in a narrow encampment, and exposed to the bite of swarms of mosquitoes by day and night. As days passed on, their position was rendered worse by hot winds blowing. Sultan Firuz was forced by these difficulties to retrace his steps towards Pandua. But as the invader's tents were struck and his useless baggage set on fire, exultation ran high in the Bengali camp.

At such a time there arrived in the Bengali camp a number of Qalandar monks, who by their solemn protestations confirmed the Sultan's impression of acute distress in the ranks of the Delhi army. Ilyās now threw off all hesitation and bounded forward with his full force of 90,000 cavalry, a herd of elephants and a large body of infantry. He overtook his enemy at a distance of only 14 miles from Ekdala, just as they had gone across a channel. Sultan Ilyās was confident of springing a complete surprise upon his adversary, but all his calculations went awry. Sultan Firuz, unable to meet the Bengalis in a pitched battle, had employed the Qalandar monks on espionage with the object of luring the Bengali Sultan out of his fortress. He was marching in perfect order in anticipation of the enemy and as they hove in sight, he swung round, with his army drawn up in three divisions,—the right under Malik Dilan, amir-i-shikar, the left under Hisāmuddin Nua, and the centre under Tātār Khan.

Sultan Shamsuddin could not avoid a contest and grouped his forces in the usual battle-array. After the preliminary jousting between the champions of the two sides, Malik Dilan assailed the left wing of the Bengal army but was thrown back. Hisāmuddin Nua then switched his right wing forward. A violent contest then ensued. The Bengalis, particularly the *paiks,* fought with reckless valour. The Delhi Sultan, who had been galloping along the line cheering and inspiring his men, himself dismounted and offered two genu-

flexions of prayer. This call to Allah for aid steeled the resolution of the imperialists for a fight to the last; they hurled back the enemy repeatedly as they surged forward, and before the sun had set, the Bengalis were seen flying away from the battle-field in confusion and disorder.

The battle thus ended in the discomfiture of the Bengalis; 47 *mast* elephants and all the insignia of their Sultan, *e.g.*, umbrella staff and other apparatus, were left on the battle-field. The carnage on the Bengali side was very heavy.

Yet strangely enough, the Bengal Sultan was not dislodged from his throne, nor did the fort of Ekdala open its gates to the victors. *Sirat-i-Firuz Shahi* would have us believe that the imperialists marched back to Ekdala after this victory determined to raze the fort, but the piteous lamentation and supplications of the Muslim women, who came out unveiled on the parapets with dishevelled hair, so moved the Sultan that he forthwith quitted Ekdala for Delhi. Zia Barani, however, strikes a different note and says that the Sultan paid no heed to the demand for an all-out offensive against Ekdala and continued his march to Delhi with the Bengali prisoners, forty-seven elephants and other trophies of war in his train.

This is the full account of the battle that was waged by the Bengal Sultan against the Lord of Delhi. He sustained defeat after defeat, was deprived of all his conquests to the west of Lakhnawati, but his sovereignty over Bengal remained unshaken and unimpaired. During the rest of his reign he cultivated friendly relations with the court of Delhi. In 1355 and 1356 A.D. his envoys visited the imperial court with gifts. On the latter occasion Sultan Firuz made a special request for the elephants of Bengal. In 1357 A.D. presents were again taken to Delhi by Malik Tājuddin, who brought in return Turkish and Arabian horses, Khorāsāni fruit and other valuables tendered by Sultan Firuz.

The friendly relations with the court of Delhi enabled Ilyās Shah to conclude his reign with a great victory won over the Raja of Kāmrup. Situated in the Brahmaputra valley north-east of Varendra (modern Rajshahi and Dinajpur districts), Kāmrup was a flourishing kingdom from remote antiquity. Rich and prosperous, a dominant seat of Hinduism amid primitive aboriginals and immigrants from the adjoining countries, it had early engaged the attention of the Muslim Sultans of Lakhnawati. Ghiyāsuddin Iwaz in 1227 A.D. and Malik Yuzbak in 1257 A.D. had advanced with Muslim hosts as far as Kāmrup, but on being confronted by the overpowering forces of the Raja both of them had been obliged to beat a retreat.

For a century after Yuzbak's invasion Kāmrup was left to itself; but about 758 A.H. (1357 A.D.) it was again invaded by a Muslim army. If the chronology drawn up by the author of the *Social History of Kāmrup* can be relied upon, Indra Narayan was the ruler of Kamta at this time, but he possessed neither the material resources nor probably the ability to check the invaders. Repeated attacks of the Ahoms from the east and the Kachari menace to the south of the Brahmaputra had so weakened his authority over his outlying territories that in 1329 A.D.[1] a petty Hindu chief practically set himself up as independent in Kāmrup. In these favourable circumstances the Muslim army pushed up the Brahmaputra to Kāmrup Nagara, and occupied it. The conquest and occupation of this city have been questioned by Stapleton and Barua, but the mint name of the coin "Chawlistān alias Kāmrup" issued by Sultan Sikandar unmistakably denotes the occupation of the city, and should not be taken to mean the territory east of the Brahmaputra in the Mymensingh district. Such a surmise is unsupported by any Persian chronicle or Assamese Buranji. The date of the coin 759 A.H. proves that the conquest and the occupation of the city had taken place previous to this year, presumably in Ilyās Shah's reign, for Sikandar immediately on his accession had to fight against the Sultan of Delhi.

Holding a rival court at the eastern limits of the north-Indian plains, Ilyās was an eye-sore to the Delhi historians, who stigmatised him as a *Bhangi* and as a leper.[2] These charges, unsupported by any independent and impartial authority, cannot be seriously entertained.

Hardly anything is known about the government, life and character of Hāji Ilyās. According to tradition, he was the founder of Hājipur and the builder of a reservoir in Firuzabad, modelled on the Hauz-i-Shamsi of Delhi. Two famous saints graced his capital by their presence, one of them Akhi Sirājuddin, who is known as the "Mirror of Hindustan,' and the other Shaikh Biyābāni who died in 1354 A.D.

The closing of Ilyās Shah's reign cannot be exactly dated. According to *Sirat-i-Firuz Shahi*, a contemporary chronicle, his death occurred in 759 A.H. (1358 A.D.), and immediately afterwards Sultan Firuz set out on the campaign against Bengal. This date is

1 Raut Kunchi grant, *Social History of Kāmrup*, vol. 1, p. 251.

2 *Sirat-i-Firuz Shāhi*, f. 34, says that Ilyās was afflicted with leprosy and visited the shrine at Bahraich in order to get a cure by rubbing the holy dust of the place on his person.

confirmed by *Tārikh-i-Mubārāk Shāhi.* But on numismatic evidence his reign is held to have ended in 758 A.H.[1]

VI. Sikandar Shāh (1357-89 A.D.)

Sultan Shamsuddin Ilyās Shah was succeeded on the throne of Bengal by his son Sikandar, who was an equally strong and capable monarch. He wielded the sceptre for more than three decades and protected the independence of Bengal against the encroachment of Delhi, but of this long and distinguished reign hardly any record has been left behind save a few inscriptions and brief references to the encounter with Delhi in the contemporary Persian chronicles.

Immediately on his accession, Sikandar's first concern was to consolidate his position on the throne, and to achieve this object he sent an envoy, named Alam Khan to Delhi in the very year of his coronation. This embassy was followed in a few months by the present of five elephants in charge of the Delhi envoy Malik Saifuddin. But with all his pacific overtures he could not avert the hostility of the lord of Delhi.

The first Lakhnawati campaign of Firuz Tughluq had ended in a great military victory, but he could neither overthrow Ilyās nor reduce him to vassalage. This independence of the rival Bengal Sultan was galling to his pride and prestige and he remained watchful for a favourable turn of events to accomplish his purpose.

Such an opportunity came with the arrival of Zafar Khan of Fars to his court at Hisar Firuza in 1357 A.D. He was a Persian nobleman who had married the daughter of Sultan Fakhruddin of Sonārgānw and filled a very high office in the revenue department. But the massacre of his father-in-law's family and the conquest of Sonārgānw by Ilyās Shah in 1352 A.D. reduced him to insignificance which he sought to mend by a visit to the court of Delhi.

The arrival of a representative of the extinct royal family of Sonārgānw revived Sultan Firuz Tughluq's hope of redeeming his prestige by conquering Bengal. The office of the Deputy Wazir was conferred upon Zafar Khan, on an annual allowance of four lakhs of Rupees. As soon as Sikandar mounted the throne on the death of Ilyās, Firuz Shah threw off the mask and sent an ultimatum from Zafarabad calling upon Sikandar to tender him allegiance. This demand was seconded by his march with a mighty army of 80,000

[1] Supp. IMC, p. 49 describes a coin of Ilyās Shah of the year 760 A.H. which is probably a posthumous issue.

cavalry, 470 elephants, and an enormous body of infantry towards Lakhnawati.

A violent storm suddenly burst over Bengal, but its ruler, though new on the throne, met it with cool courage and unbending resolution. He adopted his father's wise policy of avoiding pitched battles and fell back on the fort of Ekdala with his full force.

There lie at present in what had once been a large fortress city, beautified with villas and mosques, only a few mounds and earthworks, silted-up tanks and reservoirs ; ploughshares have now obliterated the very outlines of this fort. Yet this was the rampart against which the Delhi army dashed itself in vain again in 1359 A.D. The fighting on this occasion, too, was characterised by clashes and skirmishes and the discharge of projectiles. Zafar Khan was present in the Delhi camp, but there appeared no split in the ranks of the Bengalis, nor could any weak point in the defences of Ekdala be detected by him. On the other hand Sikandar's skilful leadership, his countless troops and military ability kept his enemy on the defensive. It is said by Afif that once in the course of the hostilities, a tower, bearing the name of Sikandar, crumbled down under the weight of the masses of men mounted on it and caused a breach in the Bengali fort.

There was now a universal desire for leading an assault through the breach in the wall of the fort, but Sultan Firuz restrained his men like the great Saracenic warrior Salehuddin who turned back from the vicinity of Mosul, when he found it too strong for capture, though Afif, the panegyrist of the Delhi Sultan, would ascribe this restraint to the Sultan's chivalrous consideration for the honour of the Muhammadan women inside the fort.

The deadlock sickened both the parties, who thereupon opened overtures for peace. The negotiations were smoothed and brought to a successful close by the suavity and wisdom of Azam Humāyun Haibat Khan, who was a Bengali official under Firuz Shah, having two sons in the service of Sikandar. Endowed with a mastery of speech and ready wit, he is said to have so humoured and flattered Sikandar that the latter gave expression to his regard for Firuz Shah in laudatory phrases. The treaty of friendship was ratified with an exchange of presents. After this Sultan Firuz quitted Bengal in 1359 A.D. and for nearly two centuries until the rise of the Afghans, Bengal was not molested by Delhi.

During the long period of peace that followed, Sultan Sikandar adorned his capital with many noble monuments of architecture, the ruins of only one of which can be seen to-day at Adina, in the neighbourhood of Firuzabad—Pandua. This sumptuous mosque,

extending 507 ft. from north to south and 285 ft. from east to west, surpasses in sheer dimension any other building of its kind in India. The central quadrangle inside this mosque forms a rectangle 400 ft. long by 150 ft. wide and is enclosed within ranges of pillard aisles, five feet deep on the western side and three on the remainder, consisting of 400 pillars in all. This vast open space offering accommodation to thousands of worshippers, appeared as the "forum of some ancient classical city rather than a Muslim house of prayer." According to *Riyāz-us-Salātin*, this mosque was begun in 1364 A.D. (766 A.H.) and was not completed in 1368 A.D. (770 A.H.) which is borne out by an inscription on the west side of its wall. This magnificent structure, equalling in size the Great Mosque of Damascus, was built by the spoliation of Hindu and Buddhist shrines. According to R. K. Chakravartty, a Buddhist stupa was dismantled to secure the necessary materials for its building, but the remains of Hindu images as well are visible today in every part of this mosque. A block with the carved head of a lion which is said to have formed part of a Hindu throne, is found attached to the steps leading to the pulpit ; many mutilated figures of Hindu deities are found in the door-sills and prayer-niches all over the mosque. The four hundred pillars with their graceful fluted shafts and expanding lotus-capitals which produce such an imposing effect, were similarly transplanted from Hindu shrines and 'It is not improbable,' says Percy Brown, " that the finest monuments of the Hindu capital of Lakhnawti were demolished in order to produce this one Muhammadan mosque." A few other monuments such as the tomb and mosque of Akhi Sirājuddin, the Kotwāli Darwāza, standing at the southern entrance to the city of Gaur, and two other mosques, one built by Maulana Ata in 1363 A.D. (probably) at Gangārāmpur in Dinajpur District, and the other at a place called Mollā Simlā in Hughly District, were erected. Shaikh Alaul Haq, a famous saint, lived at Pandua during this reign. Belonging to the tribe of Qureish, he was the spiritual successor of Akhi Sirājuddin. His piety and saintliness won the veneration of the people, but his lavish and indiscriminate charity which enormously increased his influence upon the people, roused the suspicion of the Sultan who banished him to Sonārgānw. After two years of exile he came back to Pandua, where he died in 1398 A.D., (according to *Akhbar-ul-Akhyar*).

The last years of Sikandar's life were clouded by plots and intrigues among his sons. According to the gossipy *Riyāz-us-Salātin*, the Sultan held his only son by his second wife in great affection in preference to all the seventeen sons by his first wife. The first queen, jealous of her step-son, endeavoured to poison the Sultan's ears

against him, whereupon the prince escaped to Sonārgānw and took up arms in 1388 A.D. (790 A.H.). Coins prove that he launched hostilities against his father, conquered Sonārgānw and Sātgānw in that year, and claimed sway over Firuzabad. The contest dragged on, until it was decided in 1389 A.D. in favour of the rebel prince Ghiyāsuddidn Azam Shah at a place called Goālpārā, in the neighbourhood of Pandua. The victory was, however, rendered poignant by the death of Sikandar on the field of action. According to a local tradition, Sikandar was buried in the 42 feet chamber attached to the Adina Mosque.

VII. Why Bengal had no History under Ilyās Shah's Grandchildren

With the retreat of the Tughluq Emperor from his last unsuccessful Bengal expedition (760 A.H.) begins a dark spot in the historical records of this province. Bengal became completely isolated from the moving world and cultural centre of Delhi and entered on an obscure vegetating life which lasted almost up to the time of Sher Shah, when contact was restored with Upper India. Neither Firuz Tughluq nor his successors could attempt a renewal of their hold on Bengal, because that Emperor at first became involved in campaigns and public works in other provinces, and latterly fell into extreme old age and decrepitude. His death in October 1389 (791 A.H.) was followed by the troubled short reigns of his progeny, civil wars for succession, Timur's invasion and sack of Delhi (17 Dec. 1398), the final disintegration of the Delhi empire, and the rise of small independent provincial dynasties with their eternal mutual warfare.

Bengal was thus freed from invasions and alarms from beyond her western frontier, while in the north and east, the Ahom kings had not yet consolidated their hold on the Brahmaputra valley, nor had a conquering Hindu dynasty sprung up in Kuch Bihar. This peace and the profuse bounty of Nature to the soil of Bengal greatly increased the wealth of its kings and also enabled the first two Ilyās Shāhis to make very profitable raids into Orissa and Kāmrup. Hence, the only story of Bengal in the Ilyās Shāhi age that remained in people's memory in after times was that its sovereigns passed their lives in the enjoyment of luxury, ease and pleasure, only taking care not to give offence to the sovereign of Delhi. No history could be made by such well-fed sleepers. Even the correct length of their successive reigns came to be forgotten, because one Sultan was just

like another in indolence and fatuity. If history be a record of change, there was no history in Bengal during those hundred years; the hands had stopped on the dial-face of Time in that land of lotos-eaters on the throne.

Thus it happened that when in Akbar's reign orders were sent to every subah of his empire to compile statistics and dynastic histories of the province for incorporation in the *Imperial Gazetteer* that Abul Fazl had been commissioned to write, the local officers of Bengal could collect only popular traditions and pious legends from the pandits and the keepers of the Islamic saints' tombs. These form the factual basis of the short provincial history given in the *Ain-i-Akbari,* the *Tabaqat-i-Akbari* and the *Tarikh-i-Firishta,*—all three derived from one source. This local compilation is so palpably incorrect that Sikandar (the son of Ilyās Shah) is given a reign of nine years only, while his extant coins range over 33 years; Hamza Shah is given ten years, while his coins cover only one year and a few months; Ghiyāsud-din Azam Shah is reported to have died in 775 A.H., while his coin for 813 has been discovered; Hamza Shah is represented as killed in 785 while his coin for 814 still survives; Ganesh (or Kans) is said to have ascended the throne in 787, while his actual accession took place fully thirty years later, as his coins prove.

Even the names of the Ilyās Shāhis after Saif-ud-din Hamza Shah (the 4th of the dynasty) are not correctly given in the *Ain* and other literary sources. The fifth is miscalled Shams-ud-din by Abul Fazl and others, while his correct name *Shihāb-ud-din* is given only in his coins, in the Pandua shrine manuscript borrowed by Buchanan, and dubiously as a variant at the end of the *Riyaz-us-salatin* account (text, p. 110, "some have written"). The sixth Alauddin Firuz Shah (reigned in 817) is ignored by all the old writers, but has been restored to his place by the evidence of his coins.

In the Persian histories now surviving,—probably the only ones that were written,—the first three Ilyās Shāhis (Shamsuddin Ilyās, Sikandar, and Ghiyās-ud-din Azam Shah) alone appear as distinct personalities, each with a character and achievement of his own. But even of Ilyās Shāh's son and grandson, the historians Nizām-ud-din Ahmad and Firishtah can only record that they spent their lives in ease and pleasure. Their successors were mere shadowy names.

A very good character is given by Firishtah to Saifuddin Hamza Shah, of whom we are told: "He was a king, brave, patient and kind. Because of his intelligence and practical experience, his officers conducted the administration very carefully. The neighbouring Rajahs obeyed him and paid their tributes regularly." (Newal K. ed. of text, ii. 297). Considering the shortness of Hamza Shah's reign

(some 15 or 16 months) and the fragrant legends about his father Ghiyās-ud-din Azam Shah which survived in Bengal up to the time of the *Riyāz-us-Salātin* (1788 A.D.), we shall be justified in suspecting that Firishta's notes on Bengal fell into disorder and that the certificate meant for the father has been here wrongly copied into the account of the son.

We can well imagine that during Sikandar Shah's long reign of 35 years, his wealth and life of pleasure and inactivity had thoroughly sapped the energies of the Bengal Sultanate, and that in the declining years of his son Ghiyāsuddin Azam Shah (say, after 800 A.H.) the nobles became all-powerful in the State and pulled down and set up princes on the throne at their own will. Among these king-makers the leader was Rajah Ganesh (variant of the name, *Kans*).

CHRONOLOGY OF THE FIRST ILYĀS SHAHI SULTANS
(ON THE BASIS OF THEIR COINS*)

1. Shams-ud-din Ilyās Shah, reigned 743-758 A.H. popularly called *Bhangera* (or *bhang-addict*). Died probably in Zil H. 758=end of Nov. 1357 A.D. Coins dated 744-758 A.H.
2. Sikandar, son of Ilyās Shah, *r.* 758-*c.* 795 A.H. Died probably in Ziqad 795 (Oct. 1393), or may be a year or two earlier, in battle with his rebel son. Coins dated 759-791.
3. Ghiyās-ud-din Azam, reigned *c.* 795-813. (Had rebelled against his father. May have gained the throne in 793). Coins dated 795-813.
4. Saifuddin Hamza Shah, reigned 813-814. Son of Ghiyās-ud-din. Assumed the title of Sultān-us-salātin. Coins dated 813, 814.
5. Shihābuddin Bayazid Shah, reigned *c.* 815-817 (adopted son of Saifuddin. His title was *Shihāb,* as shown on his coins and in Buchanan, and not *Shams,* as given in the literary sources). Coins dated 816, 817 A.H.
6. Alauddin Firuz Shah, reigned 817 (son of Shihābuddin). Coins dated 817 A.H.

[J. SARKAR]

VIII. GHIYĀSUDDIN AZAM SHAH, 1389-1409 A.D.

Sikandar's son and successor Ghiyāsuddin Azam Shah is a very attractive figure among the Sultans of Bengal. We have few facts

* Only the undisputed and clearly established coin-dates have been accepted here.

of his reign on record, but two very interesting anecdotes that have come down to us make him very dear to the people of Bengal. One of these anecdotes relates to his trial before Qāzi Sirājuddin, and the other refers to his correspondence with the poet Hāfiz of Shirāz. The former has obtained great currency among the people and passed into a proverb. The story runs that the Sultan while practising with a bow hit the son of a widow with an arrow and caused his death. The widow appeared before the Qāzi and sued the Sultan. Served with summons, the Sultan appeared before the court, made graceful submission to the custodian of law, and satisfied the complainant by offering a suitable indemnity in accordance with the decree; the trial over, the Qāzi rose and praised the Sultan, who told the former in the course of conversation that if he had been found remiss in his duty as a judge, he would have beheaded him on the spot. To this the Qāzi smilingly retorted that His Royal Majesty would have been scourged by the judge if he had not obeyed the law.

The other story has entitled the Sultan to fame as the correspondent of the poet Hāfiz. The circumstances leading to this correspondence are as follows. It is said that once the Sultan being stricken with a seemingly fatal illness directed his three concubines, named the Cypress, the Rose and the Tulip to wash his body in the event of his death. The Sultan recovered on that occasion, and thereupon began to show increased favours to these three beauties. Jealous of the Sultan's attention to them, the other inmates of his harem gave them the mocking epithet of *ghassāle* (corpse-washer). When the Sultan came to know of it, he wanted to humour them with an impromptu ode. He uttered the first line—"Oh cup-bearer, there is talk of the Cypress, the Rose and the Tulip," but could not compose an apt second to complete the distitch,—whereupon he wrote to Hāfiz. The latter supplied the second line running "this discussion goes on with three cleansing draughts," but also sent another *ghazal* to the Sultan, which runs thus:

Eng. trans.—"All the parrots of India will crack sugar-candy
Through this Persian candy which is going to Bengal.
O Hāfiz, be not speechless with yearning for the Court of Sultan Ghiyāsuddin,
For thy affair will be furthered by thy lamentation."[1]

Such is the account of the Sultan's correspondence with Hāfiz, the authenticity of which is disputed by many.

[1] *Riyāz*, pp. 105-106. In Prof. Mahfuz-ul-Haq's opinion, the story is untrue, but the main fact of correspondence is probable; he points out the inaccuracy in the current translation.

One important political fact of Ghiyāsuddin Azam's reign can be gleaned from the Assamese Buranjis. It is narrated in these chronicles that Sudangpha the Ahom Raja (1397-1407 A.D.) went to war against the Raja of Kāmtā for harbouring a noble Tao Sulai who had offended the Ahom Raja. Taking advantage of this situation, the Bengal Sultan invaded the territory of the Kāmtā Raja who, faced by the double danger, concluded peace with his coreligionist, and turned against the invader in combination with his ally Sudangpha. The Bengali army could not make headway against the allied local armies and was forced beyond the river Karatoyā. The correspondence with Hāfiz and the encounter with the Ahom Raja do not form the only interest of Azam's reign.

Firishta states that Sultan Ghiyāsuddin cultivated friendship with K̇hwāja Jahān, the ruler of Jaunpur (1394-1399 A.D.) by sending him elephants and other gifts. There was also a very friendly intercourse between the Sultan and Yunglo the contemporary emperor of China, who sent out Chengho, Wang-Ching Hung and a few other persons, in search of the exiled rival emperor, Hui-ti, to the kingdoms on the western ocean. In 1406 A.D. this mission visited Bengal and Mahuan, the interpreter attached to the Chinese embassy has left a scrappy but interesting account of the novel things which he came across in our capital. In 1409 A.D. Ghiyāsuddin sent his own envoys with presents to China; six years later (in 1415 A.D.) Sultān Saifuddin (Kien-fuhting) again sent a letter written on a gold plate and a giraffe to the Chinese emperor.

Our interest in Ghiyāsuddin's reign is still further increased by Mahuan's account of the dress, manufactures and entertainments of our people. Mahuan came in contact with members of the ruling aristocracy who put on tunics over their loose trousers and decked their heads with puggrees and wore shoes with pointed toes. Among the manufactures, varieties of fine cotton fabric were noticed by him, such as, (*a*) a very finely woven fabric called Pi-chih, 3 ft. by 56 ft.; (*b*) a closely woven fabric of pale yellow colour called Man-che-ti, 4 ft. by 50 ft.; (*c*) another variety called Hin-pei-tung-ta-li, 3 ft. by 60 ft. resembling gauze was in great request for turbans. Two other varieties called Sha-ta-urh and Mohei-moleh by Mahuan, 2½ ft. by 40 ft. and 4 ft. by 20 ft. respectively, formed ordinary stuff. The silk-industry was well developed, as Mahuan refers to the existence of mulberry trees and silk-worms in Bengal. Silk kerchiefs, gold-embroidered caps, painted (earthen ware) plates, ewers, bowls, steel knives and scissors attracted the notice of the Chinese official. Paper manufactured from bark was as glossy as deerskin.

Mahuan refers to the absence of tea for which it was a practice

to serve the guests with betel-nut. Wine brewed from cocoanut, rice, *tarry* and *kadjang*" was openly sold in the market; hotels and restaurants served refreshments, while Turkish bath was available in bagnios (*hamam*). Ocean-going ships which carried goods to foreign countries were made in Bengal. All large-scale transactions were done with silver coins, but *cowri* shells were used for small purchases.

Some popular amusements are also noted in his account. A class of musicians having decorated their persons with necklaces, bracelets and strings of coral beads and stone, entertained the people by playing on their instruments; another class visited the houses of noblemen during the luncheon hour, regaling them with sweet music. Troupes of acrobats roamed in the streets and gave a display of various kinds of performances. One of them which specially interested him was a fight between an acrobat and his pet tiger. After showing some physical feats in his bare body, the acrobat teased the tiger with kicks and blows until it was roused. The scene became animated when the infuriated animal sprang upon its master who retaliated by charging it. The combat went on until the animal got exhausted by its efforts; the performance reached its climax when the arm of the player was thrust into the jaws of the beast, to the mingled joy and consternation of the assembled spectators.

During the reign of Sultan Ghiyāsuddin Nur Qutbul-Alam, son of Ala-ul-Haq, a noted saint, carried on his ministry from the *gadi* at Pandua. He was a friend of the Sultan, both of them having been taught in early years by Shaikh Hāmiduddin Nāgori. Ghiyāsuddin's reign came to a close in 813 A.H. (1409 A.D.), when his death is said in a very late tradition to have been brought about by the machinations of Rajah Ganesh.

Saifuddin Hamza Shah (813-814 A.H.) 1409-1410 A.D.

The murder of Ghiyāsuddin was followed by the accession of his son, Saifuddin Hamza Shah who was raised by the army chiefs to the throne in 1409 A.D., with the title of Sultān-us-Salātin (King of kings), but a violent civil war broke out between him and his kinsmen. Hardly anything is known about this struggle except the fact that Raja Ganesh took part in it and removed Sultan Shamsuddin from the throne.

CHAPTER V

THE INTERVENING HINDU DYNASTY

I. The problem of the Hindu dynasty

Between the last Sultan of the first series of Ilyās Shāhi kings, who died in 817 A.H., and the restoration of that dynasty under Nāsir-ud-din Mahmud in 846, there lies a period of 29 years, when a family of Hindu origin but subsequently Islamised, reigned over Bengal, whose coins and traditions present the most interesting but baffling problem of the mediæval history of our province. All the authorities,—from the earliest writer (Bakhshi Nizāmuddin Ahmad writing in 1593) down to the late 18th century recorders of tradition, are agreed on the outlines of the story of this intruding dynasty, which was this: Under the declining successors of Ilyās Shāh's son, towards the end of the 8th century of the Hijera, a Hindu baron of North Bengal named Ganesh (misread in Persian manuscripts as *Kans*) became all in all in the State as regent and king-maker, and ultimately seized the throne in his own name. After his death, his eldest son (variously named Jitmal, Jaymal, Jadu and Jadusen) came to the throne, turning Muslim with the title of Jalāluddin. With this Jalāluddin's son Shams-ud-din Ahmad Shah the dynasty ended and after a short interval of usurpation and bloodshed, the second branch of the Ilyās Shāhi family became kings of Bengal.

About the events of the reign of Ganesh and the religious policy of this king and his son, the earlier authorities are disappointingly silent or in direct contradiction to the later and more detailed accounts written three and a half centuries after the events (by Ghulam Husain Salim in 1788) or found in the book of saints' legends compiled for the Muslim monastery at Pānduah. These latter represent Ganesh as a cruel persecutor of the Muslims and his renegade son in his turn as a scourge of the Hindus, and they allege an invasion of Bengal in 818 A.H. by Ibrāhim Shah Sharqi of Jaunpur and the double conversion and double reign of Ganesh's eldest son.

The puzzle has been further complicated by the finding of coins of Jalāluddin struck in the year 818 and again from 821 to 835, with a mysterious gap in 819 and 820, and the discovery of many coins in the Bengali character issued by "devoted to the feet of Chandi" (goddess) Danuja-mardan Dev and Mahendra Dev, with Shaka

dates (1339 and 1340) corresponding to the Hijera years 820 and 821. To Dr. Nalini Kanta Bhattasali belongs the credit of first proving that Danuja-mardan Dev was the highly significant title which Ganesh assumed when he openly ascended the throne after crushing the Islamic party in the State. This view has been accepted by practically all scholars now. Dr. Bhattasali's second identification, namely that of Mahendra Dev with Jalāluddin,—after that prince's restoration to Hinduism and before his second conversion to Islam and second reign,—is more open to dispute and the present writer is unable to accept it. I prefer Mr. Stapleton's view that Mahendra Dev was the title of Ganesh's second son, a boy-puppet who was raised to the throne after his father's death by the Hindu party and who reigned for a few months only over some districts of Bengal but was crushed by the partisans of the restored Jalāluddin. This would easily explain Jalāl-ud-din's relentless persecution of his Hindu subjects as *political* enemies.

Lastly, the stories, told by G. Husain Salim only, of the persecution of the Muslim Shaikhs by Ganesh are not only contradicted by Firishtāh, but have been discredited with cogent arguments by Rakhal Das Banerji, and the present writer entirely agrees with that lamented scholar on this point.

The "purification" of the lad Jalāl-ud-din by his father Ganesh in order to ensure his readmission into the fold of Hinduism by certain well-known rites, his confinement in the palace during his father's open reign, and his restoration to the throne and to the Islamic faith after his father's death, seem quite credible events, and agree quite easily with Firishtāh's account (written about 1610) that Jalāluddin renounced Hinduism in favour of Islam *after* his father's death and as a condition precedent to his acceptance of the throne. This conversion (or, as some hold, reconversion) to Islam extinguished the religious war in the State and gave unity and vigour to the government of the province.

Two things have to be said in conclusion : The usurper's name was carelessly written in Persian mss and misread as Kans (with *Kaf* instead of *gaf*). No Hindu can name his son Kansa, the tyrant who tried to murder the god Krishna, any more than a Christian can name his son Apollyon or Satan. The story so confidently told by Durgacharan Sanyal that Ganesh was a Bengali Brahman of the Varendra section and that the Bhaturia pargana in North Bengal is the second home of the *Bhaduri* family of Varendra Brahmans and that the latter gave their name to the district of *Bhadawar* in Northern Malwa and even supplied a subahdar for that province under the Mughal Emperors,—is a delightful howler created by what

is called *Volk-Etymologie* in German. The true Bhadawar (not *Bhaturia*) gave its name to a Rajput clan who served under the Mughal Emperors as we can learn from the *Maasir-ul-umara,* but not to any Brahman family. Similarly, the tracing of the Chandradwip Kayestha Raj family to this Danuja-mardan Dev, is a modern fabrication of the venal heralds (*ghatak* writers of *Kārikās*).

II. Traditional accounts of Ganesh and his sons

Tabaqat-i-Akbari (Luck. ed. p. 524):—"When Sultan Shams-ud-din (II Ilyās Shāhi) died, a zamindar named Kans acquired domination over the country of Bengal . . . The period of his power (*istila*) was seven years . . . After the death of Kans, his son out of desire for kingship turned Muslim, took the title of Sultan Jalāl-ud-din. In his reign the people were at ease and prosperous . . . He reigned for 17 years."

Ain-i-Akbari (Jarrett's tr. ii. 147-149):—"A native of Bengal named Kans fraudulently dispossessed Shams-ud-din (II Ilyās Shahi), who was Ghiyās-ud-din's grandson. When he (Kans) died, his son embraced Islam and took the name of Sultan Jalāluddin.

Tārikh-i-Firishta (Luck. ed. ii. 297) :—When Sultan-us-salātin (Saifuddin Hamza Shāh) died, his nobles placed his son on the throne, giving him the title of Shamsuddin (the Second). He was of poor intellect, owing to his tender age; a Hindu named Kans, who was one of the nobles of this dynasty, attained to great power and predominance during his reign and became the *de facto* master of the treasury and the kingdom (*sahib-i-ikhtiyar-i-mulk-o-mal*). When in the year 787 (correct as 817) he died, Kans uplifting the standard of kingship, seized the throne . . . He (Shams-ud-din) reigned for 3 years and some months.

Although Rajah Kans was not a Muslim, he maintained cordial intercourse (*amezish*) and friendship with the Musalmans, so much so that some Muslims, declaring that he was a Muslim, wished to bury him in the ground as is the practice with Islamites. When he put the crown of kingship on his head, and was adorned with the umbrella and (other) symbols of Sultanship, he reigned for seven years with perfect predominance and in the best manner, and then took the inevitable path to the world of Death; his son, gaining the honour of conversion to Islam, ascended the royal throne.

Jitmal, son of Kans, surnamed Sultan Jalāl-ud-din.

After the death of his father, Jitmal assembled the nobles and ministers and said "I believe in the truth of the religion of

Muhammad, and I shall not deviate from this (belief). If you accept me and do not turn against my royal authority, then only shall I sit on this august throne; if not, you may raise my younger brother to the throne and excuse me." All the people who could bind and loosen (the realm) replied with one voice, "We are obedient to the monarch. Earthly affairs have no connection with religion." Then Jitmal summoned the scholars and theologians of Lakhnawati and repeated the Islamic confession of faith, gave himself the title of Sultan Jalāl-ud-din, ascended the throne, made justice and fair play his aim, and thus became a modern Nau-shirwan. After reigning as king over Bangalah and Lakhnawati with the greatest power for 17 years and some months, he died in the year 812 A.H. (correct as 835). His son Ahmad Shāh succeeded . . . who followed his father's steps and ruled with great justice and liberality for 16 (correct as 10) years.

Buchanan-Hamilton's account of Dinajpur, compiled about 1810 (in Martin's *Eastern India,* ii. 618):—Ghiyās-ud-din governed 16 years, and was succeeded by his son Saif-ud-din, who governed three years, and was succeeded by his slave Shihab-ud-din, who also governed three years.

Then Ganesh, a Hindu and hakim of Dinwaj (perhaps a petty Hindu chief of Dinajpur), seized the Government. Enraged at Shaikh Badr-i-Islam and his son Faiz-i-Islam, who refused to give him the compliment due to the rank he had assumed, he put them to death. The Saint Qutb Shah . . . wrote to Sultan Ibrahim, who . . . in compliance with the request, came from Rajmahal with an army, and encamped at Satra. The Rajah of Dinwaj was then terrified, and applied in great penitence to Qutb Shah, and obtained his forgiveness, by making his son Gadusen (? Jadusen) a Muhammadan. This convert assumed the government under the name of Jalāluddin, and having been reconciled to the saint, attacked Ibrāhim Shāh, grandfather of Husain Shāh, and having put him to death, seized his government. The old man Ganesh then confined his son and seized on the whole kingdom. After having been four years in confinement, Jalāluddin recovered the government and compelled the Hindus to become Muhammadans. He governed seven years and was succeeded by his son Ahmad Shāh, who reigned three years.

(This account is professedly based upon "a manuscript account which Buchanan procured at Panduah," but it looks like a careless and incorrect summary of *Riyaz-us-salatin*).

Riyāz-us-Salātin (1788 A.D.), (Text, p. 110):—When Sultan Shams-ud-din died, Rajah Kans, a Hindu zamindar, gaining supre-

macy over all the country of Bengal, sat down on the seat of the ruler, and began to practise oppression and bloodshed. Setting himself to the slaughter of Muslims, he put to the sword many of the theological scholars and Shaikhs, and wished to root out Islam from his realm. The story runs that one day Shaikh Badr-ul-Islam, the father of Shaikh Muinuddin Abbas, sat down before this infidel without salaming him, and when asked the reason for this conduct gave an abusive reply. Another day the Rajah sat down in a room which had a low and narrow entrance door (p. 111) and summoned the Shaikh, who divining his purpose first put his foot inside the room and then entered it, without having had to lower his head. The wretch, flaming up in anger, had the Shaikh put to death at once. The remaining *ulama* were that very day placed in a boat and drowned in the river.

The saint Nur Qutb-ul-'Alam, excited by the news of the infidel's supremacy and his slaughter of Muslims, wrote to Sultan Ibrāhim Sharqi, who then possessed the country up to the frontier of Bihar, to invade Bengal and save Islam . . . (p. 112). Sultan Ibrāhim, with an army numerous like the waves of the ocean, marched into Bengal and pitched his camp at Sarāi Firuzpur. On learning of it, Rajah Kans became bewildered, humbled himself before saint Qutb-ul-'Alam, and begged him to pardon his offences and remove Sultan Ibrāhim's domination over the country. The saint demanded as the condition of his intercession with the invader that the Rajah should turn Muslim. Kans agreed, but the old man's wife forbade him. At last (p. 113) he took his son named Jadu, aged 12 years to the saint and proposed that the boy should be converted to Islam and made king of Bengal instead of his old father. It was done, and he was given the name of Jalāluddin and proclaimed in the capital as Sultan, and Islamic ordinances were enforced again.

When the saint went to Sultan Ibrāhim with the request that he should leave Bengal, now that its king was a Muslim, the Sultan was displeased and an angry dispute followed, (p. 114) at the end of which the saint cursed the Sultan's chief Qāzi and cast an evil eye on the Sultan himself. Sultan Ibrāhim, in displeasure, went back to Jaunpur, and it is said that in that very year both he and his Qāzi died.

But Rajah Kans, on hearing of the departure of the Jaunpur Sultan, deposed his son Jalāluddin, reoccupied the throne himself, and converted his son back to Hinduism (by the purificatory rites known as *suvarna-dhenu*,—details not translated here) and gave away the gold plates of the cow to the Brahmans. Jalāluddin, how-

ever, held fast to Islam, and Kans engaged in uprooting the Muslims (p. 115).

Kans became even more tyrannical and violent than before, and began to oppress the followers and relatives of saint Qutb-ul-'Alam and plunder their property. He sent Shaikh Ānwār (the son) and Shaikh Zāhid, the grandson of Qutb-ul-'Alam, under arrest to Sonārgānw, to make them disclose the buried treasure of their father and grandfather. The expected wealth not having been found there, he put Shaikh Ānwār to death, (p. 116). On the very day of the execution of Shaikh Ānwār at Sonārgānw, Kans died in his capital; some say that his son Jalāluddin from his prison got him murdered by corrupting his servants. This tyrant's rule lasted seven years.

After him, Jalāluddin sat on the throne with full power. He made many men Muslims, out of disgust with his father. The Brahmans who had accepted gifts of the gold plates of the cows, were tortured till they ate beef. He conducted the affairs of the country and of the administration in the proper way. During his reign of seven years, the people lived in perfect peace and happiness. He built in Gaur a mosque, a reservoir (*hauz*), the Jalāli tank, and *sarāis*, and the city of Gaur was populated anew in his time, (p. 117). He died in 812 A.H., (1409 A.D.). In Pandua a vast dome still covers his tomb, with the graves of his wife and son by the side of it.

III. Modern reconstruction of the history of Ganesh and his sons

The above legends about Rajah Ganesh reduced to writing 370 years after his death (in the *Riyāzus-Salātin* and the Pandua manuscript of Buchanan) prove to be pious frauds when confronted with more reasonable account given by Nizām-ud-din Ahmad and Firishta. But this destructive criticism relates only to the details and decorative flowers of the more modern narrative. Keeping our eyes fixed on the basic points of agreement among all these sources and using a certain amount of legitimate historical imagination from the analogy of the histories of other countries and dynasties, we offer a tentative reconstruction of the story of Ganesh and his line in the following form. This narrative is admittedly conjectural and it can be confirmed or corrected only when the earth gives up contemporary records of this dynasty,—of which, however the hope is very small. No inscription of Ganesh or Jalāluddin or of the latter's son Ahmad Shāh, nor any 15th century writing about them has been yet discovered.

The first three Sultans of the Ilyās Shāhi dynasty came to the throne as grown up men who had already given proofs of their ability and power of command. They were followed by three cyphers in succession,—often very young princes, taken from the harem, who remained mere tools in the hands of their ministers. In the selection of one out of several minor princes for the throne, the selfish ambition of the nobles had full play, and the support of these king-makers was solicited by the queens in the interests of their respective sons. Nizāmuddin Ahmad—and following him Firishta and Ghulam H. Salim, state significantly of each of these sultans that on his father's death he was placed on the throne by the nobles and the ministers.

The most powerful of these nobles at the close of Ghiyās-ud-din Azam Shāh's reign was Ganesh, a baron of Dinājpur who had an independent and hereditary source of strength in his large ancestral estate and personal contingent of troops not in the Sultan's pay. His infantry, recruited from the sturdy Mongoloid tribes of the submontane country, were tougher fighters than the ordinary natives of lower Bengal. His ability and experience, added to these material resources, had made him the foremost man at the Court of Ghiyās-ud-din Azam. And when that Sultan left behind him only raw youths for his successors, Ganesh naturally became the *de facto* ruler of the State. From the analogy of another king-maker, Shāhji Bhonsla in the decadent Nizām-Shāhi monarchy of Ahmadnagar, we can safely assume that Ganesh worked in concert with certain dowager queens and was followed by such Muslim nobles as were attached to the faction of these ladies. This naturally set up against him the mothers of the other princes and the disappointed nobles who followed the fortunes of the latter. Plots against Ganesh and attempts to stir up civil war resulted and the cypher Sultan may have been lured into rising against his regent, exactly as we find in the case of the royal puppets crowned by Malik Ambar during his regency two centuries later.

At the very last, Ganesh (now an old man) assumed the crown himself in 817 A.H. after the last Ilyās Shāhi prince Ala-ud-din Firuz Shāh had met with his death probably in some futile palace intrigue against his regent. This act of usurpation outraged Muslim sentiment, and an invitation was sent to Ibrāhim Shāh Sharqi, the Sultan of Jaunpur, to invade Bengal and deliver this land of Islam from the *kafir* on the throne. The lead in this move was taken by the Islamic theologians and the vast horde of unruly and ambitious disciples of the Shaikhs and Muslim monks, whose wealth and power had lately begun to overshadow the civil power.

True history shows that the story of Ibrāhim Shāh having

invaded Bengal in person in 818 A.H. cannot be true. But that does not necessarily mean that no general of the Jaunpur kingdom led an army into Bengal. Against the mail-clad heavy cavalry of upper India the Bengal irregular infantry of *pāiks* and *dhālis* and small force of ragged horsemen mounted on diminutive Morang ponies, could make no stand. On the other hand, the invaders from the dry Oudh country too, could not maintain their hold on the population nor keep their men and horses fit in the steaming swamps of Bengal when the monsoon started. So a truce was patched up by mutual consent, and the Jaunpur force went back, probably for a money consideration and certainly on the promise that Ganesh would convert his son Jadusen to Islam and make him Sultan of Bengal in his own place.

The invasion having been thus bought off and the Jaunpur kingdom being next entangled in wars with the Sayyids and other up-country Powers, Ganesh placed his son, a lad of twelve only, under protective watch in his harem and ruled on his own account under the proud title of *Danuj-mardan Dev* "Devoted to the feet of the goddess Chandi." His position during the remaining year or two of his life was unassailable, because he had the wisdom to govern the country "in the best manner" and to treat his Muslim subjects so lovingly that according to the story that reached Firishta, after his death "some Muslims, wanted to bury him in the ground according to Islamic rites." The charge against him of having vowed to extirpate the *ulama* and shaikhs which we find only in the late monkish legends of Pandua and Malda, clearly sprang from his attempt to reduce the overgrown and unruly Muslim monastic orders to obedience and to squeeze out of them a portion of vast treasures they had accumulated by beguiling Sultan Ghiyās-ud-din Azam in his old age and taking leases of the administration of districts (like Sātgānw). Their position was exactly parallel to that of the Buddhist monks to whom the Emperor Asoka gave away all his State treasures in his dotage.

I see no valid reason for disbelieving the story that Ganesh tried to turn his son into a Hindu again by the well-known purificatory ceremony of making him seem to take a new and uncontaminated birth by passing through the womb of a cow made of gold plates which were given away to the priests. But we may be quite sure that the backward Hindu society of those early days refused to accept *suddhi* (reconversion to Hinduism) however richly gilt. So, poor Jadusen-Jalāluddin had to live in misery during the rest of his father's reign, as a social outcaste, neither publicly accepted by Hindu society nor allowed to join the Muslims. This explains his

refusal to take his dead father's throne unless he was allowed to embrace Islam (again) and his bitter "persecution of the Brahmans, especially the recipients of the golden cow," as deceivers who had taken their hire but did not keep their promise. We know for certain of a similar outburst of anger on the part of the great Shivaji against the Brahmans who had been profusely fed at his Coronation (1674) but refused to recognise him as a "twice-born" Kshatriya entitled to hear the Vedic chant.

Ganesh died peacefully in old age, not murdered by his son Jalāluddin as piously imagined by Ghulām Husain Salim on the "gossip of some" (*baqaul-i-ba'ze*). He left contented subjects and nobles behind him (see Firishta). Then Jadusen succeeded (821 A.H.=1418 A.D.) and resumed his former title of Jalāluddin and the Islamic faith. In this very year we find coins with Bengali lettering issued from Pandua and Chatgaon by a king named "Mahendra Dev, devoted to the feet of the goddess Chandi," exactly resembling those of Danuj-mardan Dev. He was most probably the younger son of Ganesh, who had remained a Hindu and to whom his elder brother Jadusen-Jalāluddin had offered to leave the paternal throne in case he was not permitted to embrace Islam. Mahendra was evidently set up on the throne by the Hindu ministers just after the death of Ganesh and before the recently liberated Jalāluddin could go over to Muslim society and gather partisans round himself. I believe that Mahendra (then not more than twelve years old) was a mere puppet in the hands of a selfish ministerial faction, who planned to rule in his name,—just as after the death of Shivaji, his younger son Rājārām (a helpless boy of ten) was crowned at Raigarh by a ministerial party against his elder brother Shambhuji, who was then under detention at Panhala. It was no Hindu revolt at all, nor was there a civil war between the two brothers, in the sense of actual fighting. The attempt of the kingmakers was short-lived and ended in their speedy defeat, as no coin was struck in Mahendra's name after that one year 1418 A.D. But it intensified Jalāluddin's hatred of the Hindus as political enemies. (See also Abid Ali Khan's *Memoirs of Gaur and Pandua*, p. 29, note by H. E. Stapleton).

IV. END OF THE LINE OF GANESH

No inscription of Jalāluddin Muhammad's reign has been yet discovered. His extant coins run to the year 834 A.H.[1], and from

[1] One coin of 840 A.H. bears his name. It was probably posthumous, as we have a coin of his son Shamsuddin Ahmad, dated 836 A.H.

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them we can confidently assert that the whole of Bengal, including East Bengal (Muazzamabad) and Chittagong, was included in his realm. Tradition, as recorded by Ghulām Husain Salim ascribes to him the transfer of his capital from Pandua back again to Gaur, though he embellished the former city (no doubt early in his reign) with many splendid buildings, and constructed at Gaur one mosque, two tanks, and one *sarai*, of none of which is any trace to be found today. We can well believe that the province grew in wealth and population during his peaceful reign. The Ek-Lakhi tomb at Pandua, according to Ghulām Husain, covers the mortal remains of Jalāl-ud-din, his wife and their son. Cunningham praises this sepulchre as a very fine example of the Muslim architecture of Bengal in the age before the Mughals. It covers a square, 57½ cubits on each face, with a single arch. Many of its stones are clearly seen to have once formed parts of Hindu and Buddhist shrines, and its gateway is distinctly of such origin.

On the death of Jalāluddin Muhammad (about 835 A.H./1431 A.D.) his son Shamsuddin Ahmad, ascended the throne. But his reign was darkened by his crimes and follies, till the nobles finding it intolerable, got him murdered through his slaves Shādi Khan and Nāsir Khan, *c.* 1442 A.D.

CHAPTER VI

LATER ILYĀS SHAHIS AND THE ABYSSINIAN REGIME, 1442-1493 A.D.

I. NASIRUDDIN MAHMUD, I, 1442-1459

For the time being Ahmad's assassins held all power. An oppressive rule was followed by an equally evil situation. Mutual jealousy, however, proved the regicides' undoing, for they plotted against each other. Nāsir Khan eventually forestalled his rival Shādī Khan and, having killed, him proceeded to exercise sovereign authority; but within a week Nāsir too was assassinated. In the absence possibly of any son of Ahmad, the proposal to restore the Ilyās Shāhis received general agreement. The choice fell on Mahmud, a descendant of Ilyās who, according to Firishta had taken to agriculture and been living in obscurity.[1]

Chosen by the people the new sovereign, who styled himself Nāsiruddin Abul Muzaffar Mahmud, was able to enjoy an undisturbed and prosperous reign. He is described as a just and liberal king by whose good administration "the people, both young and old, were contented and the wounds of oppression inflicted by Ahmad Shah were healed."

No military event finds mention in the literary accounts of his reign and, considering his past occupation, his main interests probably lay in the arts of peace. A large number of inscriptions found all over his kingdom recording the erection of mosques, *khanqas*, gates, bridges and tombs, testify not only to the prevailing prosperity but also to the enthusiasm for public works and interest in the building art, which he inspired. He himself laid

1. Firishta, II, 579; *RS.* 117-18, describes Nasir Khan as a slave while Nasir Shah, whose full *julus* title is not given, is stated to have been a grandson of Ilyas Shah. The *Tab.*III, p. 266, 234, calls the slave Nasir and thus distinguishes him from Nasir Shah, a descendant of Haji Ilyas. Similarity of the two names probably led Wolseley Haig to consider the two persons as identical; Camb. III, 267. The absence from Mahmud's coins of any reference to his father may raise a suspicion that he belonged at any rate to a plebeian family. But this is unnecessary. The statements of Nizamuddin Bakhshi and Firishta are unambiguous. Convention did not favour the reference to a father who possessed no regal status. If Hussain Shah, the founder of the next dynasty, mention his father it is only to emphasise his nobility. Firishta adds that the slave Nasir was killed by the Ilyas Shahi nobles,

the foundations of the citadel and palace of Gaur which, since Jalāluddin's reign had once again become the capital, but which received its architectural embellishments anew from Mahmud. Of his monuments only a five-arched stone bridge, the *Kotwali darwaza* and part of the massive walls of the fort have survived the ravages of man and nature.

Devotion to the arts of peace was in a large measure rendered possible by the security which Bengal now enjoyed on her western frontier. This security was in its turn, the result, as Firishta correctly observed, of the war which now broke out in a deadly form between the Lodis and the Sharqis and which ended with the latter's final defeat. In the recent past Bengal had twice been the victim of Sharqi aggression. They held the major part of Bihar, a province which controlled the western approaches to Bengal. With this strategic advantage conferred by geography, the Sharqis now appeared in the role of an imperialist power and tried to expand eastwards. This formed an ever-present menace to Bengal. Within a few years of Mahmud's accession, however, Jaunpur was called upon to face the Lodis who succeeded the effete Sayyids and inherited their age-long enmity with the 'Kings of the East.' The fresh martial vigour of the Afghans turned the table and she had to strain all her resources in an exhausting war to resist the Lodis. With no little relief, Bengal watched the exhaustion of her aggressive neighbour.

For the time being, at any rate, Mahmud was freed from anxiety. By wise administration and careful husbanding of resources he enabled Bengal to recover her military energy of which his successor was to take the fullest advantage. His own reign was not entirely devoid of military achievements. Annexation of at least a part of the Jessore and Khulnā districts is implied by the inscription on the tomb, erected at Bagherhat in *Zil Hajj*, 863 October, 1459, of Khan Jahan to whom local tradition ascribes the first Muslim colonization of the area.[1] Whether this was the result of sustained operations in this region, it is difficult to say. Nor is it clear if any powerful antagonist was encountered by Khan Jahan. Orissa still held extensive tracts in south-western Bengal, and it is not unlikely that during the uncertainties of the last few reigns the Muslim frontier may have been pushed back to the Bhagirathi, a river whose waves the Ganga kings frequently claimed to have ruled. Such claims, in any case, imply hostilities. In an inscription dated in 1447, Kapilendra Deva (1436-70) styles himself

1 JASB, 1867, 135. O' Malley : *Khulna Gazetteer*, 26-27.

"Gaureswara," and claims to have conquered the "Mallika Parisa," an expression interpreted as having an obvious reference to the Muslim rulers of Gaur. Mention is made in another Oriya grant to the defeat of two "Turushka kings," one of whom according to R. D. Banerji, may have been Mahmud.[1]

The chronicles of the Mughal period give him a long reign of twenty-seven years which, however, would not accord with the numismatic and epigraphic evidences. The earliest date on his coins is 846/1442, while the latest inscription of his reign records the death of an unidentified saint on the 28th *Zil Hajj*, 863/26th October, 1459, "in the reign of Nāsiruddin Mahmud."[2]

Among the mint-towns and sites of inscriptions of his reign are Bhagalpur, Sātgānw, Bagherhat, Faridpur, and Nusratabad (a town in Sarkar Ghoraghat, on the Karatoya), thus testifying to his rule over a fairly extensive and well-knit kingdom. Inclusion of a part of the modern 24-parganas within the Sātgānw province is proved by the reference, in the Tribeni inscription of 1455, to "thana Laubala" or Laupala, a village of that name in the Haveli pargana of the same district. The "*Iqlim* Mubārakābād," in whose frontier town (*Hadd*) the local governor repaired a gate in 1459,[3] is probably to be located in the "Sarkar Bazuha" of the *Ain*, east of the Brahmaputra where, in Sylhet, the Muslim hold, established early in the 14th century, appears to have been continuous, though open to constant attacks from the Tipperah, Kachar and Jaintia Rajas.

II. RUKNUDDIN BARBAK : 1459-1474

Barbak's succession to his father's kingdom was undisputed. He had served with distinction as the Viceroy of Sātgānw.

Histories praise him as "a sagacious and law-abiding sovereign in whose kingdom the soldiers and citizens alike enjoyed contentment and security."[4]

1. *History of Orissa;* I, 289-99, 301-2.
2. JASB, 1873, 269, 271. Buchanan-Hamilton's manuscript history, quoted in Martin's Eastern India, III, 616-621, gives him a reign of 17 years. The *Riyaz*, alternatively, makes it 32. It is not unlikely that 17 by a copyist's error, was turned to 27.
3. JASB, 1910, New series, p. 145.
4. JASB, 1870, 290. RS, 118; Tab. III, 267.

Campaign on the South-West

For a detailed knowledge of Barbak's military activities we are indebted to a biographical account of a popular saint of North Bengal, named Shah Ismail Ghāzi. His exploits are narrated in a work entitled *Risalat-us-Shuhada*, compiled in 1633 by one Pir Muhammud Shattari.[1]

The hostilities to which Kapilendra Deva's grants allude were most probably a continuous process. In these operations, Mr. Banerji suggests, the advantage lay with the Orissan king. This is a statement for which no adequate evidence has been produced. No decisive territorial advantage seems, in fact, to have accrued to either side, for there is little evidence of the Muslims having ever lost their hold on Sātgānw or Tribeni. Mandaran, in the Arambagh sub-division of the Hughly district, which, two centuries earlier, figured prominently in the Lakhnawati-Jajnagar war, appears still to have remained the frontier fortress and consequently prone to change hands frequently. The campaign described in the *Risala* was undoubtedly one of such periodical border operations turning on the possession of Mandaran fort, whose recent occupation by the Orissan forces is suggested by the statement that its raja, 'Gajapati had rebelled against Barbak's authority.' The chastisement of the Raja was entrusted to Ismail, a *Qureishite* Arab of Mecca who had recently arrived in Gaur and had earned fame by successfully constructing a dam across the Chutiaputia marshes, east of the city.[2] The *Risala*, however, gives no further detail of the campaign; the statement that Ismail succeeded in easily capturing the Gajapati can only mean the ultimate recovery of the fort and the capture of its Hindu commandant.

No date can be assigned to this event. In all probability it took place in the early years of Barbak's reign, as Ismail was subsequently engaged in a protracted war on the north-east and died, after its conclusion, early in 1474.

1. The text and an abridged translation were published by G. H. Damant in JASB, 1874, 216-239. It was discovered at the shrine of the saint at Kantaduar, within the Pirgunge police station, Rangpur district, a few miles northeast of Ghoraghat.

2. De Barros, in his *Da Asia*, quoted by Blochmann in JASB, 1873, p. 287, mentions the employment of Arab soldiers by a Gaur king for the conquest of Orissa, about 100 years before the Portuguese arrived in Chittagong. It may contain a reference to Ismail's campaign.

THE KAMRUP WAR

Ismail was next appointed to lead the expeditionary forces against 'Kāmeswar, Raja of Kāmrup.' The statement raises a problem, for it is difficult to identify the names. In the 15th century the name Kāmrup not only covered all the territories comprising modern Kuch Bihar, Darrang and Kāmrup districts, but, according to Mr. Stapleton,[1] Northern Mymensingh, north and east of the Brahmaputra, as well. It formed part of a kingdom, ruled by the Tibeto-Burman Khen dynasty, which extended, before the Ahom conquest, from the Karatoya to the Barnadi and had its capital at Kamtapur. Of the three kings of this dynasty however, no one is known to have borne the name of Kāmeswar. As the scene of operations described in the *Risala* undoubtedly lay in the eastern part of the Dinajpur district, it is safe to hold that the expedition was intended to effect the recovery of the cis-Karatoya regions lately overrun by the Kāmrup forces. The Kamtapur kingdom was then in its most flourishing state and Ismail's progress was severely contested. In a battle fought near (Mahi) Santosh, in Dinajpur, he sustained a severe defeat. The saintly character of Ismail, however, succeeded where military measures failed, for Kāmeswar was so powerfully impressed that he is reported to have surrendered himself and embraced Islam. Rationally interpreted, this success can only mean a subsequent victory followed by the seizure of the local raja and the withdrawal of the Kāmrup forces across the river. Till at least Ismail's death, Bengal's north-eastern frontier ran along the Karatoya, for he is said to have established himself at Kantaduar (Pirgunge thana, Rangpur dist.), where he was eventually buried. His fame and resources provoked the jealousy of Bhandsi Rai, the commandant of the frontier fort of Ghoraghat on the Karatoya, a few miles south-west of Kantaduar, who by malicious reports against his lo alty instigated Barbak to order his execution. Ismail gladly submitted to the decree and was executed early in January, 1474.

The two Santosh inscriptions of Barbak's reign, dated in 865/1461 and 876/1471-72, should contain within these limits, the approximate date of Ismail's campaign in this area.[2]

1. JASB, 1910, 622-23. For the Khen kings of Kamtapur, see Gait, Assam, 40-43; Stapleton. JASB, 1910, 621-22.

2. These epigraphs were found near a tomb ascribed to the saint known by the name of Mahi Santosh, at Mahigunge on the eastern bank of the Atrai. The ruins are believed to belong to Santosh, although the inscriptions contain neither any reference to Santosh nor to the *Pir*. JASB, 1875, 290-91.

Firishta is the only authority for the information that Barbak collected a large number of Abyssinian slaves and employed them in the army and in the palace. He probably hoped thereby to create a special class of officers on whom the crown could rely for unstinted support. He is said to have possessed about eight thousand of such slaves and allowed them gradually to monopolise most of the key positions in the State.[1]

The latest of Barbak's coins so far discovered is the issue of 876/1471, but inscriptions extend his reign to Ramzan, 879/January, 1474, a date which is supported by the *Riyaz*. His successor's coins do not appear till 880/1475, but an inscription containing his regal titles, discovered at Malda, seems to be dated in 878/1473. Unless it turns out to be a mistake for a later date, we have here a proof of Yusuf's nomination as the crown-prince.[2]

The mention of *Jor* and *Barur* (the latter identified with a parganah of the name in the Purnia district) in a Dinajpur inscription of Barbak's reign dated in 1460, indicates the extent of his dominions north of the Ganges. Bhagalpur had acknowledged his father's rule, but the districts west of Monghyr lay within the Jaunpur kingdom as is proved by Mahmud Sharqi's inscriptions found in the Bihar district. The inscription found at Ḥatkhola, in Sylhet, of Khurshed Khan dated in 868/1463 confirms the view expressed above that the Muslim occupation of the Surma valley was continuous. Chittagong was a disputed possession, and for some years acknowledged Arakanese suzerainty. Towards the end of his rule however, Barbak's authority was re-established there, for he is mentioned as the reigning king in Rasti Khan's inscription dated in 878/1473, found at Chittagong. His reign was distinguished by an all-round expansion. A mosque inscription dated 870/1465 at Mirzagunge, Bakhargunge district, being the earliest record of Muslim occupation in the area, affords a clear proof of advance on the south, which, linking up the recently conquered Jessore-Khulnā region, thus established a continuous frontier.

Barbak showed great interest in Bengali literature. The poet Mālādhar Basu, who commenced his *Sri Krishna Bijay* in *Saka* 1395/1473, records with gratitude the receipt of patronage from the *Gaureswara* who honoured him with the title of *Gunaraj Khan*.

1. Firishta, II, p. 580.

2. Botham : Assam Cabinet, p. 164, no. 2. If the first two words in the late have been correctly read as 76, no doubt need be entertained as to its being 876. Cunningham read the date as 878; Arch. Sur. Rep. XV, 78. But Blochmann,—JASB, 1874, 298, preferred 870. See also JASB, 1895, 199. Even if this reading is correct, the above is the only possible explanation.

On the poet's son also, he tells us, the king conferred the title of *Satyaraj Khan*. The fact that the poet was a resident of Kulingram, Burdwan district, would tend to suggest the long inclusion of that area, in Barbak's dominions.

III. SHAMSUDDIN YUSUF : 1474-1481

Barbak's successor was his son Yusuf. Both Firishta and Nizāmuddin describe him as vastly learned, virtuous and an able administrator. He evinced a special interest in the administration of justice and insisted on the strict and impartial application of the law. Like Alāuddin, he totally prohibited the drinking of wine and frequently assisted the judges in difficult cases.

No further information is available on his reign in the chronicles. Only one of his coins bears a mint-name which has been doubtfully read as Sonārgānw; the rest were all issued from the *khazanah*. Among the mural records of his reign only the Baisdarwaza mosque inscription at Pandua, Hughly, dated 882/1477, indicates some territorial extension towards the south-west, presumably at the expense of Orissa. The epigraph on the mosque near Shah Jalāl's tomb in Sylhet is, in view of Barbak's inscription noticed above, a proof of the continuance and not, as Mr. Benerji (II, 216) held, of the commencement of the Muslim occupation.

Yusuf most probably died in 886/1481 for, though his records cease after 885/1480, his successor's coins do not appear till next year. Salim (119), however, gives him a reign of seven and a half years and places his death in 887/1482. This is unlikely, for none of Yusuf's coins belong to the year 886/1481. Numismatically that year is represented by the Fathabad issues of his successor.

JALALUDDIN FATH : 1481-1487

According to the chronicles, Yusuf's immediate successor was a prince named Sikandar, who was probably, as Salim states, his son. After his accession he was discovered to have been afflicted with lunacy and was consequently deposed. His reign lasted not more than three days.

The crown was next offered to another prince named Husain,[1]

1. Most of his coins bear, after the regnal titles, the words "Husain Shahi," which, like the "Badr Shahi" of Ghiyasuddin Mahmud of the Husaini dynasty, must refer to his popular name; see CCIM, II, Bengal nos. 153, 154-57. Botham, op. cit. p. 166, no. 2. Lane-Poole, op. cit. no. 96. Bhattasali,—Catalogue of coins in the collection of Hakim Habibur Rahman, p. 23, no. 18,—wrongly read what was clearly an experimental piece containing the same legend on both sides.

who on his accession assumed the title of Jalāluddin Fath. Sālim's statement that Fath Shah also was Yusuf's son is contradicted by the inscriptions and coins in which he is described as the son of Mahmud.

Fath is stated to have been an intelligent and liberal ruler "who maintained the usages of the past and in whose time the people enjoyed happiness and comfort." The Abyssinians, however, presented a serious problem. Through Barbak's and possibly also Yusuf's continued patronage they had captured most of the high positions and now swarmed in the palace and in the city. Power made them arrogant and like the Turks in the employ of the later Abbaside Caliphs, they behaved with the citizens with increasing violence. Their high-handedness becoming intolerable Fath decided to curb their power. The more defiant among them, according to Firishta, (II, 581) were consequently punished "with the scourge of justice." The discontented, thereupon, leagued with the chief eunuch of the palace, the *khwajasera* Sultan Shahzada, who commanded the palace-guards or *Paiks*. Taking advantage of the absence, on a campaign, of the loyal Abyssinian commander of the forces, the Amir-ul-umara Malik Andil, Sultan Shahzada succeeded in murdering Fath.

The latest inscription of his reign is one dated, 4th Muharram, 892/31st December, 1486. As he is not known to have issued coins in that year it is likely that he was assassinated soon after its commencement.

Among inscriptions of his reign those found in Sonārgānw and Sātgānw, by mentioning places now situated in Sylhet and 24-parganas respectively, prove the continued inclusion of those districts within his kingdom. Simlabad, mentioned along with Laubala in the Sātgānw inscription, should probably be identified with Selimabad on the Damodar, a few mile south-east of Burdwan.

With Fath, the Ilyās Shāhis finally disappeared from history. The dynasty deserved well of Bengal for with remarkable consistency it produced a succession of able rulers. They were tolerant, enlightened administrators and great builders. In shaping the economic and intellectual life of the Bengali people for nearly a century and a half the Ilyās Shāhi kings played the leading part. Tolerance was their greatest asset. To have ruled over a people of an alien faith for eight generations was in itself a great achievement; to be reinstated on the throne after twenty-five years' exclusion by a local dynasty was an even greater one. It was a singular proof of their popularity—a popularity which rested on their

past services. The dynasty had almost become an integral part of Bengal's political and social life and its passing boded ill for the country.

SECTION (B) ABYSSINIANS

V. Barbak Shah

For Fath's murder and the confusion that followed, the Ilyās Shāhi Barbak's Habshiphile policy must be held responsible. The extent to which this blind policy had resulted in destroying the old nobility is shown by the utter lack of opposition which marked the subsequent assumption of sovereignty by the slave body-guard. Ahmad's murderer was quickly displaced; but no swift vengeance visited the eunuch, for the old nobility had ceased to exist as an effective force. As Blochmann observed "from protectors of the dynasty, the Abyssinians became masters of the kingdom."

With the support of the *Paiks* and his own compatriots, Shahzada seated himself on the throne and assuming the title of Barbak Shah, received the salute of the assembled men. He gathered round him a large number of low-born men who were raised to high offices, and set about systematically to remove the loyalist element from the State. Among these, the commander of the forces, Malik Andil, was a power to reckon with, and so when he returned to the capital the usurper dared not lay hands on him. The Malik was persuaded to promise, on a solemn oath, never to injure Barbak so long as he was on the throne. Anxious, however, to avenge his master, Andil, in collusion with the *Paiks,* secretly made his way into the palace at night, but finding his enemy sleeping on the throne, remembered his oath and hesitated to strike. Providence soon came to his help, for in his drunken stupor the eunuch rolled down to the ground. Andil struck with his sword, but in the scuffle that followed he was thrown to the ground and his accomplices, waiting outside, had to be called in. Pretending to be dead Barbak was left alone and in the darkness hid himself in another chamber. He was eventually betrayed by one of his own attendants and a second attempt by Andil finally succeeded in killing him.

How long the eunuch's sovereignty lasted, it is difficult to say, for no epigraphic or numismatic record of his reign has come to light. Sālim, probably on the authority of the 16th century history quoted by Buchanan, assigns to him a reign of six months.

VI. Saifuddin Firuz : 1487-1490

True to his salt, Andil offered the throne to his master's infant son, but Fath's widow declined it in favour of Andil himself, the avenger of her husband. The Abyssinian general was thus ultimately prevailed upon by the nobles headed by the wazir Khan Jahan, to ascend the throne with the title of Saifuddin Firuz.

In the dark annals of Abyssinian predominance in Bengal, Firuz's reign alone provides a welcome relief. He is credited with having ruled justly and efficiently. His reputation as a soldier inspired respect and awe; and his attachment to the Ilyās Shāhī house made the people forget his race. His kindness and benevolence evoked warm praises from the historians and the *Riyāz* describes how he once confounded his treasury officials by the largeness of his gifts to the poor.

His coins range from 892/1486 to 895/1489. Sālim's dates copied from the *Tabaqat-i-Akbari*, namely 896-899, are thus manifestly wrong. His three years' rule, according to the 'more reliable account' cited by the *Riyāz*, was terminated by his death at the hands of the *Paiks*, who appear to have now become king-makers.

One of Firuz's inscriptions found at Sherpur, Northern Mymensingh, affords evidence of the continued inclusion of that part of Bengal within the kingdom of Gaur. The reign of this Abyssinian monarch is commemorated by the *Firuzi Minar*, one of the few monuments round the Gaur citadel that are still in a tolerable state of preservation. Some of his coins bear the mint name of Fathābād.

VII. Nāsiruddin Mahmud II : 1490-1491.

Mystery surrounds the antecedents of the next king. The Tabaqat (269), whom Sālim obviously copies, calls him as a son of Firuz, while Arif Qandhari quoted by Firishta (584), ascribe his parentage to Fath Shah. In his coins and inscriptions however, no reference is made to his father, a very unusual practice if he were really a 'king, son of a king.'

Being still very young, Mahmud was allowed only the semblance of authority, the government being conducted by the regent. Habsh Khan, an Abyssinian whom, according to Arif Qandhari, Firuz had appointed to be the boy's tutor. Habsh Khan eventually fell a victim to the jealousy of another of his race, called Sidi Badr, nicknamed Diwāna (mad), who then assumed the regency, and planned to usurp the throne.

Following the method of his former compatriots he conspired with the fickle-minded palace-guards and one night secretly despatched the boy-king. The morning found him seated on the throne, and a *fait accompli* was thus presented to the courtiers who, in any case, were either not inclined to oppose, or found it expedient to acqueisce in his accession.

None of Mahmud's coins, so far unearthed, bears any date. Epigraphic records dated in 895/1490 and 890/1491, however, confirm the statement of the *Tabaqat* that he reigned for one year. Of the three inscriptions of his reign so far discovered the one at Kalna, Burdwan, is important as showing the continuity of expansion in that direction at the expense, most obviously, of Orissa.

VIII. Shamsuddin Muzaffar (Sidi Badr, Diwāna) : 1491-1493

The assasin styled himself Shamsuddin Muzaffar and proclaimed his accession by the issue of a gold coin early next year.[1] But his rule was a fitting climax to the infamous Abyssinian epoch in Bengal, for his was a perfect reign of terror. Anxious to root out all opposition, he was not satisfied with merely purging the government, but commenced a ruthless destruction of the noble and learned men of the capital. His sword fell equally heavily on the Hindu nobility and princes suspected of opposition to his sovereignty. His tyranny soon reached the people, for in his greed for money he made extortionate demands of revenue. In his avarice he even reduced the soldiers' pay and thus antagonised the instrument of his own power. That he was still able to continue on the throne for three years was due to the prudence of his wazir, Sayyid Husain, in appointing whom Muzaffar had made a singularly happy choice.

His tyranny however became insupportable at last and drove the people to armed resistance. Foreseeing the fate reserved for Muzaffar, the shrewd wazir secretly allied himself with the insurgents and at an opportune moment putting himself at their head; commenced a siege of the citadel in which, with a few thousand mercenaries, the tyrant had shut himself up. The siege dragged on for four months in course of which twenty thousand men were said to have been killed on the two sides. Firishta's statement that Muzaffar lost his life in a desperate sally from the citadel is not supported by the *Tabaqat*, according to which, he was secretly

[1] Bhattasali: op. cit. p. 23, no. 119.

assasinated, with the help of the *Paiks*, by Sayyid Husain. This finds partial support in the Portuguese accounts.[1]

The latest recorded date of Muzaffar's reign is 10th *Rabiul Awwal*, 898/31st December, 1492, while the earliest inscription of his successor is dated 10th *Zil Qa'd* 899/12th August, 1494. The period of three years and five months allowed to him by the *Tabaqat* would, however, extend his reign upto the end of 1493.[2]

1 Tab. III, 270; Firishta II, 585: De Barros: Da Asia, quoted by Blochmann, op. cit.

2 EIM, 1929-30, p. 13. For the earliest inscription of Husain, see JASB, 1874, 302; Tab. III. p. 270.

CHAPTER VII

THE HUSAIN SHĀHĪ DYNASTY : 1493-1538

I. Alāuddīn Husain : 1493-1519

The death of Muzaffar closed a dark chapter of Bengal's history. The Habshī interregnum had violently arrested her social progress and weakened her military prestige. Frequent changes on the throne threatened to destroy monarchy itself so that Bengal became the target of contemporary satire.[1]

The situation demanded a man who could command the unflinching loyalty of all classes of the people and had capacity enough to restore peace. Such a man was found in the foreigner, Sayyid Husain, whom, as we have seen, Habshī misgovernment had driven to the opposition. Most of the accounts agree in calling him a born Arab,[2] who, with his father, Sayyid Ashraf, had recently settled in Bengal. His early life is the theme of many legends and folktales, the majority of whom centre on a village now called *Ekāni Chāndpara,* in the Jangipur subdivision of the Murshidabad district. The village contains ruins of considerable antiquity, associated traditionally and epigraphically, with Husain Shāh.[3] On the authority of an unnamed pamphlet, Salīm records a story, which is still current in the locality, of how Sayyid Ashraf with his two sons stopped, on his way to Gaur, at the house of the local

1 *Tab,* III, 268, see also Firishta, II, 584.

2 *Riyāz,* 129-31, calls him Sayyid Sharīf Makkī, for which statement no earlier or more dependable source than Firishta, II, 585 can be cited. Salīm, however, thought that his father Ashraf-ul-Husaini might have been the Sheriff but had long been resident of Tirmiz. Joao de Barros's description of the Arab merchant who landed at Chittagong and ultimately captured the throne of Bengal refers to Husain; quoted by Blochmann, JASB, 1873, 287. Buchanan Hamilton-Martin's Eastern India, iii, 448—however noticed traditions current in the northern part of Rangpur district, according to which Husain was a native of the place and was born in Devnagar, 16 miles from Govindgunge, and was, according to the unnamed manuscript history which he found at Pandua, the grandson of Sultan Ibrāhim, a a reigning king of Gaur who was dispossessed by the converted Hindu king, Jalāluddin. Thereafter the family found refuge in the kingdom of Kamatapur until 76 years later Husain found an oportunity to recover his ancestral throne.

3 JASB, 1917, 143-51. Not less than four inscriptions of Husain Shah's early reign have been discovered in the adjoining villages, JASB, 1917, 148-150; 1921, 149.

Qazi, in a *Radh* village, named Chāndpara, who, discovering his noble lineage married his daughter to the younger son, Husain, and how, after completing his education, the latter went to Gaur and obtained a minor post in Muzaffar Habshī's government. The story of the boy Husain once serving as a shepherd to a local Brahmin who, discovering in him supernatural signs of future greatness, sent him to Gaur and whom the king Husain later rewarded with the *zamindari* of the village on the nominal revenue of one *anna* (Ekāni Chāndpārā) is too much like the story of Hasan Gāngū Bahmanī's early life to merit unqualified acceptance, but his association in early life with this part of Murshidabad seems well-established. According to an early Vaishnava account he was once severely whipped for some fault during the excavation of a tank, by one Subuddhi Rāi, his superior in the revenue department, and on whom, at the instigation of his wife he avenged himself in later life by desecrating his caste.[1] How he rose in the service to become the chief minister of the tyrant we shall never know, but energy and intelligence, tact and learning must have played a considerable part. No scion of the Ilyās Shāhi house had probably survived the Habshi tyranny, and the accesion of the popular wazir was almost a foregone conclusion. The conditional election described in the Riyāz (130) could therefore mean nothing more than a formal ratification of an earlier agreement.

There is no means of ascertaining the exact date of his accession, but it appears to have been signalised by the issue of a gold coin, dated 1493, which bears not only his regal titles but also an emphatic declaration of his noble descent.[2] In the Mandaran inscription of 1494, his title was further expanded, and next year, on an inscription found in Malda he appears with the supreme dignity of *Khalīfatullah*, doubtless in conformity with the practice started by Jalāluddin Muhammad.

Thus was a new dynasty established under whose enlightened rule the creative genius of the Bengali people reached its zenith. It was a period in which the vernacular found its due recognition as the literary medium through which the repressed intellect of Bengal was to find its release. It was a period of unparalleled architectural activity, peace and prosperity, and of great military

[1] *Riyāz*, 132; see also JASB, 1917, 144. Krishnadas Kaviraj: *Chaitanya-Charitamrita*, ed. Radhanath Kabasi, 770-71.

[2] CCIB, Bengal, no. 167. Only one silver coin of this type is known; Taifoor Collection, no. 142. These coins were all issued from the *Khazana* and dated 899/1493.

conquests. Finally, it was a period which witnessed an efflorescence of the Bengali mind symbolised by the Lord Gauranga, by whose message of love and forgiveness the whole of Eastern India was carried off its feet. The Bengali mind burst its bonds and found its voice in the sweet lyricism of the cult of *Rādhā* and *Krishna,* in the emotional intensity of a resurgent Vaishnavism, and in poetry and song, social toleration and religious fervour, the exuberence of life continued unabated for the next hundred and fifty years. With this renaissance, the rulers of the house of Husain Shah are inseparably connected. It is almost impossible to conceive of the rise and progress of Vaishnavism or the development of Bengali literature at this period without recalling to mind the tolerant and enlightened rule of the Muslim Lord of Gaur.

Husain's first recorded act showed clearly the firmness that was to characterise the next twenty six years of his reign. The victorious soldiery who had commenced pillaging the capital city, was ordered to desist, and on its failure to obey promptly, Husain ordered the execution of, it is said, twelve thousand of them. The palace-guards composed of the *Paiks,* who, ever since their part in the murder of Fatḥ Shāh, had grown insolent and faithless, were next disbanded and dispersed. He finally banished the infamous Abyssinians, one and all, from his dominions and recalled the old Muslim and Hindu nobles to high offices. According to Salīm, he transferred his seat of government to Ekdala, a measure which, unless it meant a mere transfer of his own residence, was most probably prompted by strategic and climatic considerations.[1] We have no information as

[1] *RS,* 132-3. Of the many suggestions put forward for locating this city, the one made by Westmacott—JASB, 1874, 244-45,—and supported by Stapleton, JASB, 1932, 155-64, appears to agree with known facts and probabilities. Ekdala in Dinajpur, 23 miles north-east of Pandua, would answer for the fort in which Ilyās retiring from Pandua took refuge, and which was later made Husain's official capital from which he visited the Pandua shrine of Nur Qutb-ul-'Alam every year on foot. Buchanan Hamilton,—Martin's Eastern India, II, 634, states that Husain had another suburban residence at a place near Raigunge, still called Chota Parua, 18 miles to the north of Ekdala.

Change in the course of the river near Gaur must to some extent account for the frequent changes of the capital before the Mughal conquest. The great swamp on the east of the city, called Chutia Putia, was a source of great danger to the city lying as it did on a low *char* land and being liable to periodical inundation from both sides. The Ain,—trans. ii, 123,—describes Chutia Putia as a "lake in which are many islands. Were the dam that confines it to break, the city would be under water." Double embankments on the east point to the additional protection required on this side against the drain water flowing back into the city; Buchanan Hamilton, *op. cit.* iii, 74. This must have been of frequent occurence and the

to the details of his political settlement, but we are told that efficient district officers were sent to different places and all disloyal elements were suppressed.

(i) *Treaty with Sikandar Lodī and occupation of North Bihar.* The work of internal consolidation was still in progress when political developments compelled him to turn his attention westwards. In 1494 the Sharqī-Lodī war reached a climax and in a battle near Benares (Tab. I, 319), Sikandar completely defeated Husain of Jaunpur and sent him flying for refuge to Bengal. The Jaunpur kingdom was swallowed up in the Lodī empire which now extended up to the border of Bihar. This was a situation which no ruler of Bengal could view with equanimity, for an aggressive power established in a province which controlled the entrance to Bihar and Bengal would constitute a dire threat to her security. Whether the Sharqīs received any material assistance from Bengal in their struggle with the Lodīs is difficult to say, but the kind treatment which she now accorded to the fugitive king was undoubtedly the demonstration of a political friendship that may have originated earlier in a desire to preserve this counterpoise to Delhi. Husain not only allowed his Sharqī namesake to cross the frontier into Kahlgaon (Colgong in Bhagalpur) but received him with all honour and provided means for his comfort (R.S. 135). Sikandar Lodī was not slow to grasp the political motive underlying this seemingly humanitarian act, and decided on taking immediate action. From his camp at Darweshpur early in 1495 he moved upto Tughluqpur on the Bengal frontier and prepared for invasion. Husain had foreseen such a contingency. Instead of waiting at his capital for the invaders, he sent an army under his son Dāniyāl to intercept them and the two armies stood facing each other at Barh. Whether it was out of fear of the Bengali army or because of the exhaustion of their own troops, the Lodī generals, Maḥmūd Lodī and Mubārak Lohānī hesitated to attack, and finally on Sikandar's instructions opened negotiations for peace. A non-aggression agreement was entered into, followed by a delimitation of the frontiers. On behalf of his father, Dāniyāl undertook not to give shelter to Sikandar's enemies, but from the sequel this clause does not appear to have affected Husain Sharqī's continued resi-

Risalat-us-Shuhada, JASB, 1874, 222-39, detailing the achievements of Ismail Ghazi in successfully constructing a bridge (*sic*, for dam) over the swamp in the reign of Barbak, probably refers to the period when the problem was getting out of control. Husain's accession was perhaps considered a fitting occasion to move this increasingly unhealthy capital.

dence at Kahlgaon, where he died. At what line the two frontiers met is nowhere mentioned beyond the fact that Sikandar subsequently conferred the district round Tughluqpur on A'zam Humāyūn while Bihar became the *iqṭā'* of Daryā Khān Lohānī (Tab. I, 319-20, Badauni, I, 319). Inscriptions found in Monghyr and Bihar, however, prove that in South Bihar Husain's control extended to within a few miles of Patna. The occupation of the whole of North Bihar including the trans-Gandak area, which is proved by his inscription at Saran[1] appears to have followed soon after, either in accordance with the terms of the treaty or as a result of military operations started immediately on Sikandar's withdrawal.

(*ii*) *Conquest of Kāmrup and invasion of Assam.*

The threat from the west having been thus averted, Husain could now turn to the north-east, the frontier towards Kāmrup. The indecisive war fought by Barbak with the ruler of Kamtapur was followed by the loss of considerable territory on the eastern bank of the Karatoya. Nilāmbar, the third Khen king of Kamtapur whose dominions extended in the east as far as the Barnadi, consolidated his conquests by building a military road from his capital to his frontier fortress of Ghoraghat on the Karatoya, traces of which were still to be seen when Buchanan-Hamilton visited Dinajpur.[2] The Abyssinian anarchy must in any case have facilitated Nilambar's operations who, from all accounts, appears to have been an ambitious prince. In 1498, Husain launched a vigorous campaign with a view to recovering the lost territory and putting a permanent stop to Khen aggression. This war is popularly believed to have been instigated by Nilambar's Brahman minister whose licentious son had been brutally murdered by that Raja. The attack was opened with an overwhelming army led, according to traditions, by Ismā'īl Ghāzī, who marched straight to besiege the Khen capital.[3] The city was strongly fortified and the siege dragged on, according to one tradition, for 12 years. Buchanan noticed traces of what he believed to have been the invading army's camp. The Bengali forces finally gained entrace into the fortress, it is said, by means of treachery and captured Nilambar, who was taken to Gaur but subsequently escaped (B. Hamilton, ii, 458-9). The city was eventually destroyed and the whole kingdom as far as Hajo was permanently annexed. A colony of Afghans was left in Kāmrup who

[1] JASB, 1874, 304. It is fragmentary and the king's name is wanting. A later inscription found at the same place bearing Husain's name is dated 909/1503-4.

[2] *Op. cit.* ii, 680-82; iii, 410, 425-26. Gait, 42.

[3] The date is in accordance with the traditions and agrees with the epigraphic evidence. See Gait: 43; JASB, 1872, 335.

dispossessed the Hindu zamindars and took over the civil and military administration under the viceroyalty of Husain's son.[1] The Buranjis call him Dulal Ghazi possibly a corruption of Prince Daniyal who was in Monghyr till at least 1498.[2] The Kāmrup expedition, therefore, should be placed after this year, but before 1502, the year in which Husain recorded this victory in an inscription at Malda.

Salīm's account of the conquest of Kāmrup appears to contain a confused description of a subsequent advance eastwards along the Brahmaputra valley, a campaign whose fuller details are to be found only in the Buranjis, but which Gait is not prepared to ascribe to Husain Shah. That there is little scope for doubting the occurrence of this event is, howver, proved by the categorical statement of Shihābuddin Tālish (in Blochmann, JASB., 1872, 79) according to whom the invasion army consisted of 24,000 soldiers and a powerful fleet. Unable to withstand the Muslim forces led, according to the Buranjis, by the 'Bara Wazir,' the Ahom king withdrew to the hills and allowed the plains to be occupied. The occupation at the end proved untenable, for on the appearance of the rainy season, the Ahoms descended from the hills, blocked the roads already rendered impassable by the floods and finally surrounded the Muslim army and cut them down to the last man. It was thus an unmitigated disaster, but was limited in its territorial extent, for Bengal's hold on Kāmrup remained unaffected.

(*iii*) *War with Orissa.*

The Riyāz-us-Salāṭīn as well as the unnamed 16th century manuscript history of Bengal found by Buchanan Hamilton at Pandua, credits Husain with the conquest of all territories upto

[1] *RS.*, 134. It mentions the names of some of these rajas, as Mal Kunwar, Rup Narain, Gosa Lakhan, Lachmi Narain, etc. They were either feudatories of the Khen ruler or Koch names of the Kamta kings from Niladhwaj to Nilambar. The Ms. account quoted by Buchanan makes Rup Narain son of Mal Kunwar son of Sada Lakhman; op. cit. iii, 412. The fourth name is that of the third king of Kuch Bihar.

[2] *Assam Buranji*, by Huliram Dhaikiyal Phukon, quoted by Prinsep, Useful Tables, and thence reproduced by Blochmann, JASB, 1874, 79 and 335. The same source mentions the name of two other Muslim viceroys or commanders, Musundar Ghazi and Sultan Ghiyāsuddin, who may have been sent to hold Kāmrup and Hajo after the abortive invasion of the Ahom kingdom. Sultan Ghiyāsuddin is apparently identical with the person whose tomb, on a hill near Hajo, is still venerated by Hindus and Muslims and who is popularly believed to have been the first Muslim to propagate Islam in that region. He is mentioned as a saint by Mirza Nathan, Bah, II, 488-89.

Orissa.[1] The biographies of Chaitanya also make causal reference to this war in course of which he is said to have destroyed many temples.[2] No Orissan evidence has so far been discovered to confirm this account beyond the chronicle of the Jagannath temple at Puri, known as the *Mādlā Panjikā* which contains details of a war fought with the Muslims of Bengal in 1509. According to this last named source, taking advantage of Prataprudra's absence from his capital, a commander of the king of Gaur, named Ismā'il Ghāzī advanced as far as Puri, and destroyed a large number of temples. The invasion, however, did not lead to any territorial acquisition, for on the return of Prataprudra, the Muslim forces, we are told, fell back on the frontier fortress of Mandāran on which the fighting eventually centred. Prataprudra invested the fort, but owing to the treachery of one of his officers, *Govinda Vidyādhar,* the siege had to be raised and the Hindu forces withdrawn. Beyond a possible recovery of Mandāran the campaign could not have produced any tangible result.

The date of this event is a matter of some doubt. The *Mādlā Panjikā,* as noted above, puts it in 1509, whereas the date established by the chronology of Chaitanya's travels would be some time between 1509 and 1516.[3] Numismatic evidence, however, tends to place it still earlier, for the year in which the legend describing Husain's conquest of Kāmrup-Kāmtah and Jajnagar-Orissa appears for the first time on his coins is 910/1504-5.[4] Unless the three dates can be proved to be wrong or to refer to three separate expeditions, they might be taken as indicative of the protracted nature of the war.

(*iv*) *War with Tipperah.*

A state of war with Tipperah seems to have already existed when Husain came to the throne. When exactly he felt himself free to

1 Martin. op. cit. ii. 620.

2 Brindaban Das; *Chaitanya Bhagabata,* quoted in Banerji's *Banglar Itihasa,* ii. 246; see also p. 298. JASB, 1900, 186.

3 Chaitanya's renunciation is said to have occurred in 1509; Banerji, op. cit. II, 295. On his way from Navadwip to Puri he was told of the hostilities in progress on the frontier and had to accept the help of the frontier officer, Ramchandra Khan to cross the Ganges at Chatrabhog;—Ghosh, Sisirkumar: *Amiya Nimai Charit,* III, 77-79. About the year 1513 he returned to Bengal and found the frontier still closed because of the war; Ghosh, S:—op. cit. IV, 233-37. At Gaur he met Sanatan who was later imprisoned for his refusal to accompany Husain in his Orissan campaign; *ibid.* V, 46-8; Chaitanya later visited Brindaban and on his way back, at Benares, sometime in 1516. Sanatan finally joined him; ibid, V, 52-58. See also Sarkar, Sir J. N. *Chaitanya's life and teachings,* 205-206, 219-221.

4 Botham, A. W.: Catalogue of the provincial coin-cabinet, Assam, p. 170, no. 18.

intensify the war in this region it is difficult to say, but it could not have been later than 1513, the year in which the conquest of a part of Tipperah is indicated in an inscription found in Sonārgānw. Details of the war are found only in the Tipperah chronicle, the *Rājmālā*, according to which the first attack on Tipperah possessions west of the Gomti was repulsed with heavy losses. The second expedition was commanded by Gaur Mallik, who obtained an initial victory near Comilla and occupied the inland fortress of Meherkul. As the Tipperah general, Rai Chaichag, fell back on the Sonāmātiā fort, Gaur Mallik advanced towards the capital, Rāngāmāti, but on the way suffered a terrible reverse. While crossing the dry bed of the Gomti, most of his army was drowned when Chaichag suddenly released the waters which had been held back by an artificial dam a few miles up the river. Only a remnant withdrew to the Chandigarh fort but it was surprised in the night and the whole expedition ended in the hasty flight of a few miserable survivors. It was probably after this disaster that the Tipperah king occupied Chittagong and expelled the Bengali garrison. The third expedition, we are told, was led by one Hatian Khan—a curious name, who also suffered an exactly similar fate. An initial success in a pitched battle near Comilla was followed by the invading army finding its grave in the Gomti waters—an operational blunder on the part of the Bengal general, whom Husain rightly punished by relieving him of his command. The fourth expedition, perhaps commanded by Husain in person, was, however, more successful. The chronicle does not record the result of the battle fought near the Kailārgarh fort,[1] in which Dhanya Mānikya himself appears to have taken part, but from the inclusion of a tract of Tipperah within the administrative charge of one of Husain's officers in the inscription mentioned above (JASB, 1872, 333), the annexation of at least a part appears fairly well-established. A recovery of Chittagong is also indicated by the *Rājmālā* referring to its capture by the king of Arakan from Husain's forces during the progress of this war.

Whether the Tipperah war was followed by or coincident with, operations against Arakan is a point on which our available sources are not sufficiently explicit. Nor do they furnish a consistent account of the territorial result of the war. According to the *Rājmālā*, (545-6) the Arakanese king took advantage of Husain's pre-occupation with Tipperah and occupied Chittagong. It was evidently to deal with this Arakanese aggression that the military operations, mentioned by Parameswar and Srikara Nandi were started, possibly

[1] *Rājmālā*, ed. K. C. Sinha, 16-18. Webster, *Tipperah Gazetteer*, 13.

under the command of the crown-prince Nusrat, to whom local traditions of Chittagong ascribe the first Muslim conquest of the district.[1] He was assisted by Paragal Khan, the patron of Parameswar and later the military governor of the newly conquered territory. Operations were probably continued for some years, even after Nusrat's return, and from his head-quarters on the Feni river, Paragal, and after him his son Chhuti, steadily pushed the Arakanese southwards and also maintained a vigilant watch on the Tipperah king. The date of the expedition cannot be ascertained, but perhaps it was practically over by 1517, in which year the Portuguese emissary, Joao de Silveiro landed at Chittagong and found the port in possession of 'the king of Bangala.' De Barros adds that at that time the king of Arakan was also a vassal of Bengal, which, if true, would mean the reassertion of a suzerainty established earlier, and which, in any case, proved temporary.[2]

II. Alāuddin Husain Shah's character and achievements

With the exception of the Assam campaign all the military projects of Husain were crowned with success. Before he died in 1519,[3] he had not only restored Bengal's old frontiers but had considerably extended them by the annexation of Kāmrup, Saran and a part of Tipperah. No rebellion disturbed the security and peace which reigned throughout his extensive and well-knit dominions comprising all the territories bounded by Saran and Bihar on the north-west, Sylhet and Chittagong on the south-east, and Hajo on

1 Hamidullah: *Ahadis-ul-Khwanin,* 17-18. A rich Arab merchant, named Alfa Husaini is stated to have helped the king of Gaur in the conquest of Chittagong with ships and money and as a consequence to have become very influential in Bengal. He is perhaps to be identified with the merchant Alfa Khan in whom Martim Jusarte found a friend in 1533; Campos, 34.

2 *Parāgali Mahābhārata,* quoted in Sen, *Bangabhasā O Sāhitya,* De Barros: Da Asia, quoted in Campos, 28. 30. Cf. Phayre JASB, 1873, I, 127, who obviously relied on Faria y Souza, a late writer and whose English translation has been according to Campos 'very unfortunate., See Arakan in the Pre-Mughal History of Bengal, *Bengal Past and Present,* 1944.

3 *Riyāz,* 135; Salim's statement that Husain ruled for 27 years nearly agrees with the date established by inscriptions of his reign, the latest of which is dated, 15th Shaban, 925/12th August, 1519; JASB, 1873, 295, no. 31. Husain's coins so far published, however, cease with the year 924/1518, Botham, op. cit. 169, no. 16. Cf. Banerji, op. cit. ii, 253, CCIM, 137, who accept 1518 as the year of Husain's death.

the north-east, Mandāran and the 24-parganahs on the south-west.[1] It is a pity, no details are known of his administration to which, considering his rise from a humble position in the state he must have made valuable contributions. A learned man himself, his interest in the diffusion of learning was natural, and the college whose establishment is recorded in the Malda inscription of 1502 (JASB, 1874, 303), must have been only one of many such foundations. The tomb of the saint Qutb-ul-'Alam at Pandua received large endowments from him, and he is said to have journeyed every year on foot from Ekdala to pay his respects at the shrine (R.S., 135).

Alāuddīn Husain Shah was unquestionably the best, if not the greatest, of the medieval rulers of Bengal. With the true insight of a statesman, he realised that the Ilyās Shāhī dynasty, whom he supplanted, represented Bengal's hopes and aspirations and had almost become a national institution. With these aspirations he identified himself so whole-heartedly that his alien origin was forgotten and his Hindu subjects compared him to the incarnation of Krishna. By recalling the old aristocracy to power and position he showed that though a new dynasty had come to power, the old traditions were to continue. His courtesy and affable temper, his modesty and unfailing kindness won the hearts of his people who in gratitude called him the 'Crown of kings' (*Nripati Tilak*) and 'Adornment of the universe' (*Jagat Bhuṣana*). To a country groaning under tyranny, encroached upon on all sides, and rent by racial and religious factiousness he gave peace, justice and political glory which she had not witnessed since the days of Ilyās. Posterity remembers him not only for the material advantages he conferred on the people, but for his liberalism and catholicity of mind of which it is hard to find a parallel in Muslim India until the age of the great Akbar. In appointing Hindus to high offices he was of course only continuing the traditional practice of his predecessors, but to put them in charge of highly confidential work was certainly something more than mere diplomatic expediency. His wazir (Gopinath Basu, entitled Purandar Khan), his private physician (Mukunda Das), his chief of the body-guards (Kesava Chhatri), master of the mint (Anup) were all Hindus ; the *Rājmālā* adds the name of Gaur Mallik, his

[1] His inscriptions in Bihar have been noted above; for the Sylhet inscription of his general Rukn Khan dated 918/1512, see JASB, 1922, 413 plate. That the whole of modern 24-Parganahs was included in his dominions is proved by the reference in the *Chaitanya Bhagabata* of Brindaban Das, to Chatrabhog on the Ganges (Diamond Harbour sub-division), under the *Lashkar*, Ram Chandra Khan, beyond which on account of the hostilities then in progress with Orissa, no traveller was allowed to proceed; quoted in Banerji, op. cit. ii, 298.

general in charge of the second Tipperah expedition. The names of the two brothers Rup and Sanātan, one of whom held the highly important office of the private secretary (*Dabir-i-Khās*) are well-known. His literary appreciation was not confined to Arabic and Persian only, but was extended in an increasing degree to the vernacular literature. Most of the works produced in his reign have however perished, but among the Bengali writers Mālādhar Basu, Bipradās, Bijay Gupta (Chhota Vidyāpati), and Jasorāj Khan mention his name with gratitude.[1] Indeed his enthusiasm for Bengali literature was infectious and his governor of Chittagong, Parāgal, has been immortalised by his patronage of Parameswar, the earliest translator of the *Mahābhārat*. A devout Muslim himself, he was yet free from that rank intolerance which mars the annals of many Muslim kings of Northern India. Some of the Vaishnava writers ascribe to him a belief in the incarnation of Chaitanya, to whom he undoubtedly showed great consideration. During the latter's visit to Gaur, Husain issued orders to all his officers to show respect to that *Sannyāsi* and to provide facilities for his journey.[2]

Husain was unlucky in not having had an Abul Fazl to record his sayings and glorify his actions, and no contemporary chronicle has survived. But the few facts known of his reign are sufficient clues to the greatness of a ruler who may well be compared with Akbar. Of all the Muslim sovereigns Bengal had had, he captured most the imagination of the people and "the name of Husain Shāh, the good, is still remembered from the frontiers of Orissa to the Brahmaputra." (Blochmann, JASB, 1873, 291).

II. Nāsiruddin Abul Muzaffar Nusrat Shāh 1519-1532

According to the Riyāz-us-Salātin Nuṣrat was the eldest of his father's eighteen children and so was unanimously raised to the throne. He appears to have already been nominated for succession when he was allowed in 1515 to issue coins in his own name, (CCIM. Bengal, No. 211), a privilege usually enjoyed by the crown-prince

[1] Paragali Mahābhārata, quoted in Sen, op. cit. p. 158, Bijaya Gupta: *Manasa-mangal*, and Jasoraj Khan: *Padavali*, ibid. 122. Chakravarti, R. K.: *Gaurer Itihas*, ii. 104; *Rajmala*, 16 Ghosh, S. *Amiya Nimai Charit*: Sarkar, *Chaitanya's Life and Teachings*, V. 10; Sen, op. cit. 167.

[2] ..Sen, op. cit. 189, Banerji II, 263-4. Mālādhar Basu was commissioned by Husain to translate the *Bhāgavata* into Bengali; Sen, op. cit. 122.

in Bengal. He possessed fine human qualities and strong family affections. Instead of putting all his brothers to death as was the custom, he increased their allowances and raised their dignities. He inherited his father's good qualities to the full and by his apprenticeship in important administrative and mlitary work, had acquired a thorough grasp of political problems. In addition, he possessed an unusual amount of diplomatic ability of which very soon he had to give clear proof.

(*i*) *Anti-Mughal confederacy and agreement with Bābur.*

Husain's non-aggression pact with Sikandar Lodī had only partially solved a problem. It gave him peace but held out a threat. By their hold on the western approaches of Bihar the Lodīs controlled the entrance to Bengal—a situation which was fraught with dangerous possibilities. His subsequent occupation of the North Bihar country protected only one flank, for no political or military barrier separated Delhi from Monghyr. Within two years of Nuṣrat's accession, however, the Lodī Empire began to crack. By 1522, the Lohani State was set up in Bihar, and the country from Jaunpur to Patna became virtually independent. Common interests of security bound the new State to Bengal, and this friendship became a cardinal point in her foreign policy. Nuṣrat appears to have entered into an active alliance with the Eastern rebels and received a large territorial share when the Eastern provinces fell off from Ibrāhīm Lodī's control. While the Lohānīs and Farmūlīs appropriated the country from Jaunpur to Patna, to Nuṣrat fell the districts north of the Tons river. Husain's conquests in North Bihar were rounded off by the annexation of the whole of Tirhut over which he placed his brothers-in-law, 'Alāuddīn and Makhdūm-i-'Ālam (R.S. 136). Hājipur, on the Gandak-Ganges confluence, where the latter established himself, thus became a strategic base and controlled all the river entrances into Bihar. Across the Gandak, the hold on Saran was widened to include the riverain tract on both sides of the Ghogra, as far as Azamgarh[1] within his military control.

With such military and political safeguards, he could wait calmly for the consequences of Babur's victory at Panipat. As the leading Afghan chiefs flocked to the East, Nuṣrat exerted himself to build up an Eastern *entente* and make Bihar a centre of resistance against the Mughals. In August, 1526, the Afghans suffered their first reverse when Humayun drove Ma'rūf and Naṣīr Lohānī from Qanauj

[1] An inscription in Sikandarpur, on the Ghogra, dated in the year 1527, records the section of a mosque by Nuṣrat's commandant (Sar-i-lashkar), of the troops stationed at the pass of Kharid; JASB, 1873, 296.

and Jaunpur and annexed the Gangetic tract up to the Ghogra south of the Tons. Prudent as he was to realise the strength of his adversary and the fickleness of his allies, Nuṣrat Shah took care to disarm Mughal hostility by professing neutrality. For more than a year he maintained Babur's envoy at his court and evaded a direct answer as to his attitude. And just when the latter's suspicion was being roused, he sent him back with his own envoy, with presents and assurances of loyalty. It had the desired effect and Babur in December, 1528, decided that "to go to Bengal would be improper."[1]

This diplomacy only served to cloak Nuṣrat's real policy which was certainly in accord with the actions of the Afghans, who early in the same year had made their first attempt on Qanauj, but had retired on Babur's approach. What active help they received from Nuṣrat we shall perhaps never know, for the relevant portion of Babur's memoirs—our only contemporary source for these details—are irretrievably lost. Babur's advance on this occasion along the Ghogra and his bestowal of Saran on the Shaikhzāda ? Shah Muhammad Farmūlī (Babur, III, 675) however, affected Nusrat's territory directly, and we may well suppose that his garrisons west of the Gandak tried to defend their positions by force of arms. The death of Bahār Khan Lohāni early in the year had deprived the Eastern confederacy of one of its strongest supporters, and the victorious advance of Babur across the Ganges to Buxar now almost completely disorganised it. Sher Khan Sur accepted a Mughal jagir in South Bihar and with the assistance of the governor of Jaunpur now pursued his own interests at the cost of Afghan unity. The Lohāni State under the boy king, Jalāl Khan, was hardly in a position to continue the leadership and to Nuṣrat, therefore, fell the task of re-organising it and at the same time keeping up his diplomatic friendship with the Mughals.

His hand was immensely strengthened by the arrival in Bihar in October of the same year, of a Lodī pretender Mahmud, whose family prestige was able to rally the Afghans once again under his standard. His seizure of the Bihar kingdom from the powerless Jalāl was perhaps countenanced by Nusrat who had to look to the interest of the coalition as a whole, but it had a most unfortunate effect. It cost the confederacy the support of the Lohānis. Depending on his father's friendship with Nusrat, Jalāl and his party fled to Hājipur to ask for his armed intervention, which if granted, would have meant, the complete dissolution of the *entente*. Being perhaps

[1] Babur, iii, 544, 628, 637. The Mughal envoy, Mulla Mazhab along with Nuṣrat's agent Ismail Mitha, was received by Babur in January, 1529.

apprised of the Bengali ruler's real attitude, the Lohānis sought the earliest opportunity to make contact with the Mughals. This, however, had to be prevented by all means. By threat or persuasion Jalāl, whom, as Babur notes "the Bengali held as if eye-bewitched,"[1] was therefore, detained at Hājipur, while preparations were set afoot for Mahmud's grand military enterprise.

This, however, proved a *debacle*. Mahmud's prestige and Nusrat's active inspiration regenerated the coalition in which Sher Khan was also persuaded to join, and a three-pronged attack on the Mughal position was set in motion in February, 1529. Mahmud and Sher led two armies along the two banks of the Ganges to Chunar and Benares, while Biban and Bāyazid moved north across the Ghogra to Gorakhpur (Babur, III, 652). Nuṣrat's part in this campaign, curiously enough, appears to have escaped Babur's notice, but this was probably the force which, according to Salim, (RS. 138) was despatched under Qutb Khan across the north of Bahraich, with the obvious plan of attacking Lucknow from the rear. The whole strategy, however, was frustrated by Mahmud's personal incompetence. While Sher succeeded in taking Benares and Qutb Khan fought several engagements, Biban and Bāyazid failed to keep to the time schedule and were still in Saran when Mahmud at the news of Babur's approach fled to Mahoba without risking a single engagement. On Sher Khan's consequent withdrawal the whole southern front completely collapsed, leaving Nusrat alone to hold the northern riparian tracts across which Babur now planned to move in pursuit of Biban and Bāyazid. Sher Khan submitted to the Mughals within a month ; other Afghans who had fled north across the Ghogra wanted to follow suit and had to be kept back with force by Makhdum-i-Alam at Hajipur; Jalāl and his party eventually succeeded in evading the Bengalis and sent in their submission to Babur's camp at Buxar (Babur, III, 663-4, 659, 676).

Nuṣrat's diplomacy was now sorely tried. Having been deserted by all his allies, he was nearly exposed and was now required to give a concrete proof of his neutrality by signing a formal agreement. From his camp at Buxar, early in April, 1529 Babur dictated to the Bengali envoy, Ismail, three draft articles one of which demanded a free passage across the Ghogra. A special Mughal envoy was sent with the draft to obtain Nuṣrat's early approval.[2] Now that the grand anti-Mughal front had collapsed there was no choice for the

[1] Abbas in Elliot iv. 349. Babur, iii, 664.

[2] Babur, iii, 661, 676. The articles are nowhere specified and the sentence is incomplete in the text. Only one of the terms summarised on p. 665.

latter beyond armed resistance. And yet probably to give Biban and Bāyazid time to get away he delayed his answer, while Makhdum was instructed to erect defences along the Gandak and post troops on the Ghogra-Ganges confluence. Babar waited for nearly a month, sent another envoy with Ismail Mita demanding, on pain of war, the withdrawal of troops from the Ghogra, and finally decided to use force. In the resulting three days' battle, fought for the Ghogra ferry, the Bengali forces—infantry and cavalry supported by boats—gave a good account of themselves and were ultimately driven off by superior tactics. The Mughals crossed over into Saran ; at his camp at the village of Kundbah in the Nirhun parganah Babur received the submission in person of Jalāl who had "succeeded in getting away after some fighting," and who was now reinstated in Bihar as a tributary vassal. Nuṣrat's political and military defeat was complete, but thanks to his diplomacy, Bengal was still at peace with the Mughals. A few days later, the Mughal envoy returned and brought letters from the "*Lashkar-Wazir* Husain Khan and the Shahzada of Monghyr" who signified their consent on behalf of Nuṣrat, to Babur's terms of agreement.[1] The first phase of his diplomacy was thus concluded.

It is difficult to assess precisely the territorial loss which this defeat meant for Bengal. Babur promised to respect Nuṣrat's dependencies, and an inscription at Kharid testifies to his rule over at least a part of the Ballia district in 1529. And yet Babur is known to have bestowed Saran and Gorakhpur on his new Afghan partisans and to have visited Kharid and Azamgarh. The agreement further demanded the withdrawal of troops from the Ghogra which amounted in effect to a cession of the area west of the Gandak. In any case, the agreement, so far as Bengal was concerned was never meant to be observed, for her interests ran counter to those of the Mughals, and conflict was inevitable. Nusrat immediately set to work for organising another coalition. The Lohānis had been irreparably alienated and with the wily and self-seeking Sher in control of Bihar, it must have taken him and Mahmud a great deal of persuasion and threat to revive the earlier partnership.

Babur's death in 1530 presented an opportunity and in June next year with Biban, Bāyazid, and the unwilling Sher[2] on his side, Mahmud moved out of Bihar. The Mughal garrison was driven out

1 *Ibid.* iii, 669-74, 76. Among the casualties in Nuṣrat's forces was one 'Basant Rao, a pagan of repute.'

2 Sher's collaboration with the Afghans and his ultimate treachery is mentioned by Abbas, E. & D. iv, 349, and Ahmad Yadgar, Tārikh-i-Shāhi, 184 ff. Tab,

of Jaunpur and Lucknow was threatened. What part Nuṣrat's forces played in this campaign is nowhere mentioned but Mahmud must at least have received large material assistance from Bengal. For the crushing defeat at the battle fought at Dadrah, his incompetence, however, was less responsible than Sher Khan's treachery.

With the death of Biban and Bāyazid on the battle-field and Sher accepting a Mughal vassalage for Chunar, the confederacy was now fairly dead. Nuṣrat's real attitude could no longer be concealed, and Humayun was now rumoured to be preparing to march against him. Realising his inability to face the Mughals alone he had now to look about for allies and found one in Bahadur Shah of Gujrat, a powerful enemy of Humayun. A proposal for friendship and alliance was sent to him through Malik Marjan. Before the proposal could take concrete shape its author was removed by the hand of death, and the whole diplomatic plan was frustrated. Yet it did have the immediate effect of compelling Humayun to postpone his invasion of Bengal and turn to meet the reported hostile moves of Bahadur.

(*ii*) *War with the Ahoms.*

The conclusion of peace with Babur in 1529 was fortunate. The year saw the opening of a protracted and at the end, costly war with the Ahom king of the Upper Brahmaputra valley. Husain's ill-fated expedition had left bitter memories and its disastrous end may have encouraged the Ahoms to take the offensive. To what extent they followed up their victory can however, never be known, for the Muslim accounts make no reference, and the Buranjis are confused and sparing in significant details. According to the latter (Gait, 88), the war was opened almost suddenly, by the Ahom King advancing in 1529 along the Brahmaputra against the Muslim headquarters at Hajo. No engagement is reported to have taken place, but the Assamese established a military base at Narayanpur, north of the river, an obvious threat to the Muslim town across the frontier. In what manner the latter reacted to this clearly hostile act is not known, but two years later they are stated to have taken the offensive, and advanced with artillery, infantry and boats into the Ahom district of Darrang. In a naval engagement fought at Temāni (? Trimohani), the Bengali forces were ultimately defeated and compelled to fall back on Kāmrup. In order to bar their future advance, the Ahoms thereupon erected fortresses at Salā and Singiri, south and north of the Brahmaputra opposite Hajo. Singiri was subsequently attacked by the Bengalis under

however, confuses the two events. Qanungo, op. cit. 74-5, disputes the accuracy of the statement, but on this point see Banerji: *Humayun Badshāh*, i, 44-46.

Bit Mālik (or Mit Manik), but they were again defeated and driven back with heavy losses in men, horses and cannon.

After Nuṣrat's death the attempt was renewed next year by a general who, according to the *Buranjis*, bore the name of Turbak. The son of the Ahom King who was detailed to hold the fortress, offered battle north of the river and was signally defeated. With the fall of Singiri, and Ahoms took shelter in Salā, but were forced to evacuate the fortress after heavy artillery fire. This success, however, was neutralised by a subsequent defeat suffered in a naval engagement. Turbak was now reinforced by Husain Khan with whom he pushed eastwards and engaged the main Ahom forces on the Dikrai river (Sibsagar district) but was again defeated. The Assamese superiority in river battles was once again demonstrated when they inflicted another defeat on Turbak's retreating army on the Bharali river (Tezpur district) in which he lost his own life and a large number of elephants and artillery pieces. (Gait, 89-91).

Thus ended Husain Shāh's attempt to subjugate the Upper Brahmaputra valley. Its failure was largely due to Bengal's weakness in naval power. The hold on Kāmrup, in any case, could not have long survived this defeat, for the political revolution that followed soon after in Bengal was taken advantage of by Biswa Singh, the founder of the Kuch dynasty who extended his conquests about this time at the cost of both the Ahom and the Muslim territories and established the Kuch Bihar kingdom. (Gait, 45-48). The districts of Kāmrup and Goalpara had to be reconquered before the Mughal forces could advance on Assam proper.

Nuṣrat died at the hands of an assassin, one of his own slaves whom he had punished while paying a visit to his father's tomb at Gaur. The latter part of his life is said to have been sullied by what Salim calls " dissipations and sundry obsessions to detail which would harrow the feelings of all." This, if true, would be a sorry conclusion to an otherwise successful and enlightened reign. In his dealings with the Mughals he proved himself an astute diplomatist and a far-sighted statesman. Babur's superior strategy, his own undependable *confreres*, it is true, weakened his hold on the trans-Gandak country, and frustrated his political plan, but he had certainly the satisfaction that as long as he lived the frontiers he had inherited from his father, remained immune from violation. A true disciple of Husain Shāh,, he maintained a liberal outlook[1] which was fully expressed in the composition of his government and

[1] Sec Sen: op. cit. for a well-known Bengali couplet which is supposed to refer to Nuṣrat's leanings towards Vaishnava-like divine love.

army. Like his father he continued to watch with sympathy the progress of Bengali literature. He himself is said to have ordered a Bengali translation of the *Mahabharata*, which would perhaps be the earliest of its kind. It was to the active interest of one of his officers, Chhuti Khan of Chittagong, that we owe Srikara Nandi's translation of this epic. Another of his officers, named Kaviranjan, was himself a poet of repute and has made affectionate mention of his sovereign.

IV. Alauddin Firuz, 1532-33

From coins, Nuṣrat's younger brother, Abdul Badr (Mahmud) appears to have been declared heir-apparent as he is found using the royal insignia as early as 933 A.H. 1526.[1] As the sequel suggests, the nomination was probably opposed by an influential court-circle, headed by Makhdum, the governor of North Bihar, who on Nuṣrat's sudden death raised his young son to the throne with the title of Alauddin Firuz. He was able, however, to rule only for a few months.[2] Beyond a few coins and a solitary inscription at Kalna (Burdwan), no record exists of his short reign. Bengali literature, however, had reason to remember him with gratitude, for he demonstrated, at an early age, a keen interest in letters. It was at his request, while still a prince, that the poet Sridhara composed the versified love story of Vidyā-Sundara.[3] His deposition and ultimate death at the hands of his uncle thus put an end to what gave promise of an enlightened reign.

V. Ghiyāṣuddin Mahmūd and the Afghan conquest 1533–1538

In view of his earlier nomination, Abdul Badr had perhaps a technical right to the throne, but in supplanting his nephew he created enemies whom he not only failed to reconcile but tactlessly

[1] See his inscription at Sadullapur, JASB, 1895, 214-5. It explains the hitherto unintelligible words, *Badar Shahi*, found in some of his earlier coins: CCIM, ii, pp. 179-89, nos. 223-27.

933 is the earliest date found on his coins issued from Fathabad and Nusratabad mints: CCIM, II, Supplement, p. 70, nos. 213 and 220. RS, 139, states that Nuṣrat had raised him to the dignity of an Amir.

[2] RS, printed text, has three 'years,' but Stewart found it three months in his manuscript. No record of his reign is known to extend his rule beyond 1533. The Kalna inscription is dated in March of that year.

[3] Sen, Sukumar: *Bāṅglā Sāhityer Kathā*, 20.

drove into open hostility. The governor of Hajipur, an immensely powerful man refused to recognise his accession and on the pretext of avenging Firuz's death, he allied himself with the deputy-ruler of Bihar and prepared for rebellion.

This was most unfortunate for Bengal. Nuṣrat's proposed alliance with Gujrat was not given effect to and a valuable chance was lost of striking at the Mughal power when Humayun was busy with Bahadur. There was still just a chance of reviving the Eastern coalition for neither Sher nor the Lohanis were at heart loyal to the Mughals. But Mahmud lacked imagination and failed to make a correct appraisal of the situation. He over-estimated the advantage of an open alliance with the Lohanis whose fickleness and political impotence he failed to notice.

Afghan historians have left few details concerning Mahmud, but it is almost certain that the despatch of the governor of Monghyr, Qutb Khan, in 1533 for "conquering the country of Bihar"[1] although said to have been directed against Makhdum had really the destruction of the latter's ally Sher as its immediate objective, and had the secret support of the Lohanis. It was a fatal slip and snapped Bengal's ties with the Eastern chiefs. It caused a realignment of forces, for it strengthened Sher's friendship with Makhdum and the two were now violently opposed to Bengal and the Lohanis.

In order either to save himself or avert the consequent political crisis, Sher is said to have tried his best to dissuade Mahmud from this course. But prudence was a virtue foreign to the Bengal Sultan's nature and Qutb Khan pushed on with his forces. Sher defeated and slew Qutb Khan and obtained valuable stores and treasure.[2]

For Mahmud it was a great defeat and immensely damaged his military prestige. His blind adhesion to the Lohanis prevented him from saving the situation even now by recognising in Sher a far more powerful ally than the factious Afghans of Patna. But wounded pride clouded his judgment and besides he could never compromise with an ally of Makhdum, a rebel from his authority. An army was now sent to punish the latter, and the Lohāni faction, perhaps according to plan, refused to allow Sher to come to his help. Before the engagement, however, Sher's envoy reached Hājipur and Makhdum entrusted to him all his treasures to be held by his friend in safe custody pending the result of the battle. The battle, however, went against him and he was slain.

[1] Tab. trans. II, 153: RS, 140.

[2] Ahmad Yadgar, op. cit. 180; Abbas, op. cit. 333.

Mahmud's authority was no doubt vindicated, but the process instead of weakening Sher vastly added to his strength. Makhdum's accumulated treasure went to increase his prestige and military power, for whose destruction the discomfited Lohanis now planned a radical move. The conspiracy to assassinate him having failed, Jalāl now decided secretly to accept Mahmud's suzerainty and thereby obtain open assistance against his over-bearing minister. On the pretext of leading his army into Bengal—a country which was ostensibly at war with Bihar, Jalāl and his supporters crossed the frontier and throwing themselves under Mahmud's protection, accepted vassalage.[1]

Nuṣrat hạd met an exactly similar situation by detaining the Lohānis in Hājipur while Mahmud Lodi took possession of Bihar. Such a course of action did not appeal to his short-sighted brother whose political ambition, incidentally, was immensely flattered by the prospect of adding Bihar to his dominions. It gave him, in addition, a technical right to crush Sher Khan, the hated servant of his vassal. His preparations were accordingly accelerated and early in 1534 a powerful army in command of Ibrāhim Khan and accompanied by the Lohāni king, moved out of Monghyr. It was a formidable force consisting of artillery, cavalry and the redoubtable Bengal *Paiks,* and Sher handicapped by his lack of artillery and foot-soldiers, had to rely on surprise tactics. After holding Ibrāhim for nearly a month in the narrow plain of Surajgarh, a few miles east of Barh, bounded on three sides by the Ganges, the Kiul and the Kharagpur hills, during which the latter vainly tried to draw him out or by-pass him, Sher came out and offered battle. The Bengalis got over their initial surprise and fought well, but Sher by his brilliant use of cavalry decided the issue, and by day-break Mahmud's great army had been routed. Ibrāhim Khan was slain and Jalāl made an ignominious flight to his protector.

From the political developments that followed directly from it, the battle of Surajgarh has been rightly regarded as one of the most decisive in medieval India. The territorial loss to Bengal was not extensive,[2] but its political and military consequences could not remain obscure even to Mahmud. While it destroyed his military prestige, it placed Sher firmly on the road to kingship. Mahmud and Sher were now confirmed in their hostility to each other and

[1] Abbas, *op. cit.* 338; Ahmad Yadgar, op. cit. 181.

[2] It does not appear that Sher occupied the territories east of the Kiul river. For details of the battle of Surajgarh, Abbas, 339-342. Qanungo dates the battle in March 1534.

both determined to pursue the struggle to the bitter end. For the former, blinded by fury, the Mughals did not exist either as an ultimate enemy or as a possible ally. To the cautious Sher, however, Humayun's attitude still determined his movements, and the latter's continued residence in his capital till February, 1535, prevented him from pursuing his military plans in the east. The renewal of the Mughal war with Gujrat, however, removed his anxiety and before the rainy season he completed his annexation of the Bihar territory as far as Bhagalpur.

Whether this annexation was uncontested we do not know, but Mahmud's preparations were evidently incomplete when Sher opened his campaign. Surajgarh appears to have placed him on the defensive and all his preparations were based on holding the Teliagarhi Pass. With the help of the members of the Portuguese mission who had been imprisoned on their arrival at Gaur in 1534[1] and who were now released for the purpose, Mahmud prepared to defend the pass and sent most of his army and fleet there. At the same time he opened negotiations for greater military assistance from the Portuguese viceroy of Goa.

The campaign was opened in 1536 by Sher advancing along the Ganges to force his way to his enemy's capital. Teliagarhi, however, justified its position and the defenders refused him passage. Realising their strength here, Sher left a detachment under his son Jalāl Khan to keep them engaged while he turned aside, entered the difficult and hitherto unexplored country of Jharkhand and took his enemy completely by surprise when he appeared suddenly before Gaur.[2]

[1] About the year 1534 a Portuguese mission landed at Chittagong and asked for trading rights. The request was coupled with threat and the high-handed seizure of Muslim trading vessels on the high seas. In trying to imprison them the governor of the port had to fight them in course of which a number of the Portuguese was killed. The rest, along with their leader, Martim Jusarte, were sent to Gaur where Mahmud kept them in confinement. A second request for their release, also coupled with threat and pillaging of the Chittagong port could not obviously be complied with. It was only in his desire to obtain Portuguese military assistance against the aggression of Sher in 1535, that Mahmud began to treat his prisoners as allies and through them opened negotiations with Goa, (see Campos, *op cit.* 33-38. The author's bias against the 'Indian ruler' is quite obvious).

[2] Ahmad Yadgar, op. cit. 183, says he took with him ninety thousand two-horsed cavalry, while the Portuguese accounts magnify the army to forty thousand cavalry, sixteen thousand elephants, and two hundred thousand men with a fleet of 300 boats. See, Campos, *op. cit.* 38.

No historian has cared to describe the route which Sher took on this occasion. Ahmad Yadgar, *op. cit.* 183, merely states that he took a route which no one had traversed. Tārikh-i-Daudi, only hints at it by mentioning the jungle. As Qanungo,

Although the Bengal army hastened back to defend their capital, Mahmud who was frightened beyond measure by the boldness of his adversary, lost heart and opened negotiations. His Portuguese friends advised him to hold on till at least the breaking of the monsoon when his fleet could cut off Sher's return across the Ganges and thus annihilate his invading force. But he was not made of the stuff of Hāji Ilyās or Sikandar and sought an easy way by offering indemnity. According to the Portuguese accounts, he offered thirteen lakhs of gold, which Sher, aware of his possible difficulty if he tarried longer, was glad to accept and withdrew.

Sher Khan Sur attains to Supreme Power

Mahmud's discomfiture was now complete. He lost all territories west of Rajmahal and had in the process demonstrated his cowardice. Unless he could buy off his enemies or obtain powerful allies, his fate was well-nigh sealed. Teliagarhi in Sher's control was a dagger pointed at the heart of Bengal, and he could never hope to regain his initiative of action. To his request for help, the Portuguese replied in 1537, pleading inability to send it immediately, but promising to do so next year. (Campos, 40).

Sher was determined to forestall his enemy. The Portuguese were probably expected soon, and so disregarding Humayun's stay at Agra in the autumn of that year he marched possibly through Teliagarhi and on the pretext of non-payment of the annual tribute which, the Portuguese add (Campos, 40) Mahmud had never undertaken besieged Gaur. Humayun, roused at last by these undoubtedly aggressive proceedings, now hurried to the East. A straight march into Bengal would have, even at that late hour, relieved Mahmud, who with a courage born of despair now prepared to stand a siege. But Humayun fell in with Sher's plan and proceeded instead to lay siege to Chunar. To keep the Mughals detained there sufficiently long to enable him to complete the conquest of Gaur, Sher left the operations against Gaur to his generals, Khawās Khan and Jalāl and hurried to Chunar to strengthen its defences and removed his family and treasures. Both the sieges dragged on for months and on the eve of Chunar's fall Sher sent a new general to Bengal to force a decision. Mahmud who had reached the end of his perseverance and was faced with the prospect

120-24, has shown, there could be no other unprotected or hilly route than the one Mir Jumla took in 1660, namely, *via* Santal Parganahs, Birbhum and Murshidabad, crossing the Ganges perhaps somewhere near Godagari.

of famine, now sallied out, gave battle, was wounded and fled with a few followers to North Bihar. The besiegers then carried out an assault and on the 6th of April, 1538 (6th Zil Qad, 944), on the second centenary of her independence, Bengal's capital admitted a foreign army.[1]

Mahmud at last remembered Humayun and decided to seek his help. Following his capture of Chunar, the latter was on the point of concluding peace with Sher by recognising his recent conquest of Bengal, when his envoy arrived at his camp at Baharkunda. (Qanungo, 159). Humayun was urged to break off negotiations and resume his march to Bengal, most of which country was asserted to be still under Mahmud's control and from where the combined Bengali and Mughal forces could easily expel the Afghans. Humayun agreed and immediately decided to march. On his way at Darweshpur, near Maner, the fugitive Sultan of Bengal joined him and according to Jauhar[2] was comforted and assured of all possible help. How the Mughal race for Gaur was halted at Teliagarhi, and how on his eventual arrival Humayun found the city of Gaur emptied of all Afghan troops and treasures by his clever adversary are, however, details which belong, more appropriately to the next chapter. The interest which independent Bengal had in this march ceased when on his arrival at Kahlgaon, Mahmud heard of the execution of his two sons by their Afghan captors at Gaur and in grief and affliction, "in a short time, pined to death." (RS. 144).

Little can perhaps be said in Mahmud's defence, to whose utter incompetence, the extinction of Bengal's independence was in a large measure due. He had inherited an illustrious throne and a sound foreign policy, but proved unworthy of both. The Portuguese accounts picture him as a gay debauchee whose women alone numbered ten thousand. (Campos, 31). In the conduct of his state affairs he showed an utter lack even of common sense, for it did not require any great statesmanship to realise the necessity of implementing Nuṣrat's alliance with Gujrat. It was a fatal miscalculation when he threw in his lot with the Lohānis whose capacity to do harm had already been demonstrated. With a lack of foresight that, for a king was nothing short of a crime, he precipitated

[1] *RS*, 142. The Portuguese accounts add that the city was burnt and that Sher carried with him '60 millions in gold.'

[2] *RS*, 143. *Tazkiratul Waqiat*, puoted by Qanungo, *op. cit.* 166. Abbas, *op. cit.* 364, however, explicitly states that Humayun did not receive him kindly or pay him the respect he expected, so that 'Mahmud repented that he had come.' The meeting took place, according to *RS*. at Darweshpur, but Abbas places it at Maner.

a quarrel with the ablest of the Afghan chiefs and with an exaggerated notion of his own power, he ignored the Mughals in order to destroy Sher. In judging him allowance should be made for the genius of his adversary who had no match for political cunning and resourcefulness in the whole of India. But even without Sher as his rival, Mahmud's conduct of foreign policy, his imprudence and pusillanimity, would have sealed Bengal's fate. Even a victory at Surajgarh could have hardly prevented Humayun's ultimate occupation of Gaur.

CHAPTER VIII

BENGAL UNDER AFGHAN RULE :

House of Sher Shāh Sur

The sudden rise of the Afghans to the imperial position in the 15th century, their contest with the Mughals throughout the 16th and their infiltration into eastern India form a stimulating chapter of Indo-Muslim history. Enlisted in the army of Muizzuddin Muhammad bin Sam,[1] they came into prominence during the reign of Balban when they were placed as garrisons in Bhojpur, Kampila and Patiali, the three principal centres of Hindu disaffection in the Doab. During Sultan Muhammad bin Tughluq's reign they rose in arms under their leader Malik Shāhu Lodi in Multan, Qazi Jalāl in Gujrat and Ismail Makh in the Deccan. But their elevation from hirelings and mercenaries to the throne of Delhi was due to Bahlul Lodi who united the tribal chiefs into a confederacy. Within a quarter of a century of his death, however, the Afghans became divided among themselves and yielded the sceptre of India to the hands of the Chaghtai Turks miscalled Mughals.

This change of crown was followed by a bitter Afghan-Mughal contest during which there appeared a man of genius in the Afghan ranks, who once again bulit up a transient Pathan empire. The son of a humble assignee, he rose by successive steps to be the tutor and guardian of Jalāl Khan Lohāni, the minor ruler of Bihar, and finally the master of that kingdom in 1534 A.D. Thereafter his rise was rapid and striking ; he annexed all the territory of the Bengali Sultan, west of Teliagarhi and made a bid for the crown of Bengal in 1536 A.D.

The astonishingly swift rise of this Afghan soldier became a matter of concern to the Mughal Emperor Humayun, who set out from Delhi in July 1538 (945 A.H.)[2] with a large army and a flotilla to subdue him. He first turned his arms against Chunar, an ancient castle crowning a low range of hills, that jutted out into the Ganges. Having captured it after a siege of six months he marched to Maner where Sayyid Mahmud Shāh the fugitive Sultan of Bengal came to invoke his protection against the aggression of the Afghans. Imme-

1 Firishta, text. p. 58.

2 *Riyāz us Salatin*, text, p. 143, *vide* chronology in the appendix.

diately Humayun broke off the negotiations that he had begun with Sher at Baharkunda and hurried to Bengal.

In this crisis Sher fell back upon his inner resources to save himself and his army. Master at that time of only a thin strip of land from Baharkunda to Rhotas, he found that he could achieve his deliverance by the seizure and removal of the treasures that had fallen into the hands of Jalāl and Khawās Khan, his lieutenants at Gaur. So he raced towards Bengal with only 500 men by the route along the Ganges, by-passed Humayun near Patna and rowed away from Mungir to Gaur in only 48 hours, long before the Emperor's arrival at Colgong.[1]

First Afghan Conquest of Bengal, March 1538

Immediately on his arrival Sher assumed the sovereignty of Bengal by striking coins in his name,[2] and detached Jalāl Khan and Haji Khan Batni to hold the pass of Telia garhi against the Mughals. Thereupon he applied himself to the conveyance of the treasures which were so vast that "60 millions in gold" were estimated by the Portuguese to be their value.[3] At first Sher was very much handicapped by the want of a sufficient number of horses and pack-animals required for their transit to Rohtasgarh. He was, however, helped out of this difficulty by the capture of a large number of elephants, horses and mules by Jalāl Khan who, on the removal of the treasures joined his father at Sherpur in modern Birbhum district and Humayun entered Gaur the capital of Bengal without opposition.

Situated at the junction of the Ganges and the Mahānandā, lat. 24° 53', long 83° 14', Gaur was a famous city during the 15th and 16th centuries. Sprawling over an area of 20 sq. miles and fortified with a rampart and a moat, 150 ft. wide, adorned with splendid mosques and minarets (Baradarwazi, Sona Masjid and Firuz Minar), reservoirs and lakes, the largest of which was Sāgar-dighi, an ornamental piece of water, measuring 1600 by 800 yds.,

[1] *Akbar Nama*, Eng. trans. p. 333, when Humayun reached Mungir he received intelligence of the occupation of the passes at Garhi by Jalāl Khan.

[2] The earliest coin of Sher bears the date of 945 A.H., *Islamic Culture*, 1936.

[3] Campos, *History of the Portuguese*, p. 40, the fabulous wealth of the Muslim Sultans of Bengal is corroborated by other authorities. Manrique who visited the ruins of Gaur in 1641 refers to the discovery in a hollowed wall of 3 copper vessels, filled with gold coins and precious stones worth three crores of rupees. Travels of Sebastian Manrique, 1629-1643, Hakluyt Society, 1927, vol. II, pp. 128-132, quoted also in *Memoirs of Gaur and Pandua*, p. 43.

this metropolitan city and fort was thronged by a medley of races and peoples,—Arabs, Abyssinians, Afghans, Portuguese and Chinese who poured in by land and water, from the east and the west in the 16th century. But during the year 1537-1538 A.D., the city had become the cock-pit of contending armies, when swarms of dark and white-skinned warriors, including the Afghans and the Portuguese fought in its streets and on its walls. The worst of the misery befell the citizens of Gaur when Sher pillaged and scorched it with fire during the siege and evacuation of it on the approach of Humayun (Nov. 1538 to April 1539).

Mughal Conquest of Gaur

Immediately on his entry, Humayun took steps to bring it back to life. He cleansed the roads, repaired the walls and villas and then took up his residence in the palace (Jauhar, Eng. Trans. 13).

It was the month of May; nature was now in a very gay mood in Bengal; her woods were decked with luxuriant foliage; the rivers swollen with rain water, banks of clouds raced over the sky. The heat of the day was no doubt unpleasant, but gusts of wind accompanied by showers would often arise and then there would be a glorious freshness in the air. Such an agreeable place with its quiet, pure air enraptured Humayun who in a mood of ecstasy conferred upon Gaur (meaning graveyard) the name of Jinnatabad (the heavenly city).[1] He apportioned the different parts of the country among his officers, placed garrisons at important points, and then abandoned himself to pleasure (Jauhar, Eng. Trans. 13).

During the period of his luxurious repose in Gaur, unexpected developments came, however, to pass. The Afghan chief came out of his retreat, occupied south Bihar, and began to range across the Mughal territory from Benares to Bahraich; flying columns of his cavalry approached the neighbourhood of Gaur and preyed upon the convoys of supplies to the capital. They worsted a body of 5000 Mughal horse under Yaqub Beg, but were driven away by Shaikh Bāyazid. More than that, Humayun's brother Mirza Hindal seized this opportunity to rebel in Agra; Humayun's own troops were enervated by the moist climate and his officers corrupted by the richness of the soil of Bengal. When the Emperor required of his brother Mirza Askari whole-hearted exertion in his cause, he was inclined to press for such perquisites as the muslin, eunuchs and

[1] *Akbar Nama*, text, p. 158, Badauni, text, p. 349, *Tab. Akbari*, text, 48.

elephants of Bengal,[1] while his (Askari's) officers demanded increased salary, higher rank and payment in cash ; the indiscipline that had grown among his officers during the period was equally shocking. Zahid Beg who was connected with the Emperor's concubine Byke Begam, on being nominated to the viceroyalty of Bengal declined the proposal saying "Ah ! Your Majesty could find no better place to kill me in than Bengal !" (Jauhar, Eng. Trans. 13–14).

Such an alarming state of affairs at last awoke the Emperor from his sleep. He appointed Jahangir Quli Beg with a body of 5000 horse, governor of Bengal and hurriedly left the capital during the height of the rains in July. He joined his vanguard under Askari at Mungir, and then marched along the south bank of the Ganges to Maner in full assurance of overawing the enemy by a display of force.

Autocrat of a large empire, young and inexperienced, Humayun again underestimated his enemy. A thick-set personage, with a sharp pointed nose and large flashing eyes, Sher possessed wonderful resourcefulness and fertility of mind and never bound himself to any hard-and-fast course of action. Humayun failed to see that the shrewd Afghan had bowed his head, even as the cane-branch of Bengal bends before the breeze, only to lift its head after its fall. He had allowed him to enter Gaur, and to march back unopposed, only to meet him at an hour suited to him and on a ground of his own choice. Consequently as soon as Humayun placed his feet in the Shahabad district, the lair of the Tiger-lord, Sher crouched for a spring.

Battle of Chausa

For four days during the march of the Mughals westward from Maner, Sher harassed them by flank attacks. But when the Emperor reached Chausa, situated on the east bank of the Karmanāsā, 4 miles west of Buxar,[2] Sher boldly marched forward from the east to intercept the enemy. At this Humayun was forced to turn round and meet Sher who pitched his tents at a distance of two miles, on the east bank of the *Thoranadi* described as "a swampy rivulet" in the memoirs of Babur.[3] The hardships of the march and the loss of his

[1] Sir Jadunath's MS, Makhzan-i-Afaghana, pp. 28-29, Dorn, History of the Afghans, p. 116, Tārikh-i-Shāhi, text, p. 195.

[2] Imp. Gaz. vol. X, p. 184.

[3] King-Memoirs of Babar, ii, 388.

The *Thoranadi* is also indicated in the map attached to Cunningham's ASR.

guns did not encourage Humayun to make an immediate attack upon the enemy. He pinned his hope on the arrival of effective reinforcements from Delhi and was not stimulated to action, even on the arrival in his camp of Baba Beg, Mirak Beg and Mughal Beg, the commandants of Jaunpur, Chunar and Oudh respectively. (Gulbadan, text, 41).

During this period of tense waiting at Chausa Sher evolved a plan for crushing the enemy by a mixture of *finesse* and arms. Schooled in the hard realities of life, Sher shrank from an open engagement before being perfectly sure of his ground. Accordingly he assumed the mask of fidelity and wrote to the Emperor, saying "What am I but the humble Farid, a servant of Your Majesty, and where could I find resources enough to measure swords with the ruler of Hindustan?" (Tar. Shahi, 196). He proposed that if he were only permitted to hold Bengal under the Emperor's suzerainty he would relinquish all his othr possessions.[1] Oppressed by the scarcity of corn and diffident of any help from his brothers, Humayun's prestige condescended to accept these terms but on one condition,

vol. 8. The description of the disposition of the rival armies given in the CHI. vol. IV, p. 33, and Banerji's *Humayun* is refuted by the contemporary chronicles. 1st. According to Abbas, Elliot, vol. IV, p. 370, and Badauni, text, p. 350, a narrow stream lay between the two camps. If it is taken to be the Karmanasa, Sher's and Humayun's camps could very well have been pitched on the west and the east banks respectively, but Abbas says that this stream was only 25 yds. wide. But according to Thornton, the Karmanasa attains to a breadth of 100 yds. during the rains, (Thornton's Gaz. p. 548), so the encampment could not have taken place on the opposite banks of this river. Then what could possibly be the river that separated the two camps? Dr. Qanungo rightly points out that there is the Thoranadi between Chausa and Buxar which was also crossed by Babur in 1529 A.D. Secondly, it is a very narrow stream and fits in with the size mentioned by Abbas. So if this is the stream where the rival armies encamped, Humayun faced Sher from the west. This disposition is supported by Tab. Akbari, vol. II, p. 33, and *Makh.* Sir Jadunath's MS, p. 30. According to them Sher came to the vicinity of Humayun's camp but did not pass beyond it. Thirdly, that Sher marched from the east is also supported by factual evidenee. According to Jauhar, (Sir Jadunath's MS. pp. 35-36 quoted also in Dr. Qanungo's Sher Shah, p. 187). Sher marched from the east to overtake Humayun. The same story is told by Ni'amatullah (Dorn. Eng. trans. p. 118). According to him, Humayun on hearing of Sher's march lost no time to return (turn round). Abbas also says that Humayun retraced his steps and turned in the direction of Sher's army. From these facts it is difficult to resist the conclusion that Sher approached Humayun from the east and was encamped on the Thoranadi, while Humayun faced him from the west.

[1] Abbas, Elliot IV, p. 370, Badauni, text, p. 400, T.A. text, p. 43. Firishta, text, p. 226, Briggs Eng. trans. that Sher wanted Bengal or Bihar is not warranted by the sentence in the N.K. text. According to Jauhar, Eng. trans. p. 17 Sher demanded Chunar but this statement is at variance with the authorities cited above.

viz., that Sher would make feigned flight and allow the emperor to make a mock pursuit of him for one or two stages; after which the emperor would turn round and go back to his capital, granting to Sher the necessary *farman* for the administration of Bengal.

There was a very eminent personage in the Mughal camp[1] named Shaikh Khalil, descended from Shaikh Fariduddin Ganj-i-Shakkar and commanding great veneration in both the camps by his saintliness. He was now deputed by the Emperor to communicate his message to the Afghan chief. Sher became inwardly bent on war, but he cloaked his real designs beneath an increased flirtation with the Mughals. He ratified the treaty with his seal and sent it to the Mughal camp. A friendly atmosphere now prevailed. The deadly rancour and hatred that had divided the Afghans from the Mughals gave way to a bland familiarity. The Mughals began to visit the Afghan camp and participate in their entertainments. (*Makh.* 31). Having thus enmeshed the enemy, Sher resolved to encompass his ruin behind the smoke-screen of a faked attack on the Chero chief.

In the hilly forest-clad areas of the modern Shahabad district, there lived an aboriginal people named Cheros. Having waged a long warfare with the Harihobans Rajputs from their settlemnt at Bihiya, during the eleventh and the twelfth centuries, they migrated to the country about Bihar city and rose to power under a leader named Mahāratha, about the thirties of the 16th century (Shahbad dist. Gaz. 17, 19). He organised a body of infantry and cavalry out of his hardy clansmen and made attacks on the neighbouring people of the plains (*Makh.* 31). During the period of Humayun's struggle with Sher, he had greatly increased his power and openly defied Sher by cutting off supplies to his camp, so that the latter had been obliged to detach Khawās Khan with a body of cavalry against him.

As soon as the ratification of the treaty was made by Sher, (according to the Mughal sources: Badauni, 1, 35) with the oath on the Quran, he raised an alarm of the Chero chief's impending attack on his camp. For two successive days, he made marches in the threatened direction; on the following night too, at about 2 o'clock, he sallied forth with the pick of his army in the same

[1] According to Abbas, Elliot, vol. IV, p. 370, Jauhar, Eng. trans. p. 17. Humayun sent Shaikh Khalil, but according to Nizamuddin. (TA. p. 43) Firishta, (lith. ed.) p. 226, Badauni, Per text, p. 351, *Makh.* Sir Jadunath's MS, p. 40, Shaikh Khalil was sent by Sher. The testimony of Abbas has been preferred by us to other authorities, not only on account of the narration of many interesting details about the negotiation unrecorded in any other chronicle, but also of the specific statement of his appointment by Sher in his service, Elliot, IV, p. 378.

direction, leaving the guards and camp-followers as a mask behind. After advancing 5 miles or so, he brought his army to a halt, divulged his plan to his commanders and turned round with his forces. Having grouped them in three divisions, one under Jalāl, another under Khawās and the third under his own command,[1] Sher proceeded in secrecy and under the shadow of the night (Akbarnama, text, i, 159).

Sher's army had long been trained to ambuscades; the victory at Surajgarh and the capture of the elephant Shyam Sundar belonging to the Raja of Jharkhand had been effected by the same stratagem (Tar. Shahi, 193). It was early dawn as the Afghan columns approached the Mughal camp. The Mughal soldiery were then either locked in sleep or in the performance of their morning duties. The Emperor himself was just out for ablution, preparatory to prayer when the news of the enemy's approach was communicated to him. But even the extremity of the crisis failed to produce any marked change in the temper of the monarch who went on with the routine duties, ordering the army to attack. As Abbas says, " the Emperor directed his army to the attack, saying that after a short delay and having performed his ablutions he also would follow" (Elliot, iv, 375).

In the meantime, the Afghans came and fell upon the foe like the thunderbolt.[2] They made their attack from three sides, and as they closed in they shut out all means of escape. They destroyed the bridge across the Ganges and their flotilla which had been dragged up to Chausa kept up a discharge of arrows, stones and shot on the Mughal camp, while on land their cavalry plied their swords indiscriminately, allowing the Mughals little time either to don their armour or to gather in any regular formation; soon wave after wave of Afghan cavalry surged to the Emperor's quarters. The alarm was sounded and 300 horse rode up to his assistance, but an enemy elephant at the very moment penetrated into his tented quarters (Jauhar, Eng. Trans. 18). The danger to his life called forth the courage of Humayun. His bodyguards Gurg Ali and Tatta Beg stood dumb-founded before him with a double-barrelled gun and a spear, whereupon the Emperor wrenched away the spear from Tatta Beg and assailed the elephant with it. At this moment the entire camp, which was a vast city, accommodating 17,000 servants in the personal service of the Emperor alone,[2] was thrown into

[1] Tarikh-i-Rashidi, Eng. trans. p. 470.

[2] Sher's treachery at Chausa is supported by Afghan, Mughal and Portuguese sources. 1. According to Abbas, Elliot, vol. IV, p. 374, Sher in course of an

indescribable confusion, with shrieks and wails of the wounded and the runaway Mughals, and the shouts and roars of the charging Afghans. At length the Emperor's voice rang out for closing with the enemy, but nobody responded to his call. He nobly stood his ground, but as the enemy converged upon him, a faithful Mughal rode up to him and seizing his bridle, urged him on to flight (Jauhar, Eng. Trans. 18).

This is the true story of the Afghan *coup* and Mughal slothfulness, called the battle of Chausa, that occurred in Sept.(?) 1539 A.D. According to Abul Fazl, 8,000 Mughals including Mirza Muhammad Zamān, Maulāna Jalāl of Tatta and many other doctors, perished in the water of the Ganges in their attempt to escape (A.N. text, i, 160, Firishta, 226). The Emperor's consort with her ladies-in-waiting and slave-maids, concubines and other ladies estimated at only 4000 fell into the hands of Sher, who treated them with great respect (Gulbadan, Eng. Trans. 136). The Emperor himself was saved from a watery grave with the support of the inflated bag of Nizām, the water-carrier who was allowed by the grateful if eccentric Humayun in return for this service, to wear the diadem of India for six hours.

THE RECONQUEST OF BENGAL BY SHER, OCT. 1539 A.D., 946 A.H.

After the first round of the fight was over, Sher hastened to Bengal to deal with the Mughal viceroy, Jahāngir Quli. It appears that he took his post at Garhi, while his son Jalāl made a diversionary movement from the south-west. Jahāngir Quli held out with his forces, but being worsted in several engagements, he sought refuge with the local chiefs. Sher inveigled him to a private interview and then dispatched him along with his followers (A.N. text, 1, 160; Riyaz, text, 147). The fall of Gaur and the murder of Jahāngir Quli was followed by the capitulation of the Mughal garrisons in other parts of the country. The port of Chittagong which had become the rendezvous of the Portuguese at this time, was still held by the officers of Sayyid Mahmud Shah, Khudabakhsh

address to the Afghan chiefs, said "I break off the treaty; Makhzan-i-Afāghana, p. 30, also says that the treaty was solemnly ratified. 2. According to Jauhar, Humayun while exhorting his brother Mirza Hindal to make a common stand against the Afghans, said, "Let us be unanimous and devise means to repel Sher Shah and the Afghans who after concluding peace with me at Chausa, acted treacherously, attacked me at night and have now gained possession of all my territories." Nizamuddin also says, text, p. 43, that the Emperor was composed at heart after the ratification of the treaty when Sher fell upon Humayun's army. Badauni, text, p. 351, and Campos, p. 41, go farther and state that Sher ratified the treaty by an oath on the Quran.

Khan and Amirza ? Khan. Taking advantage of a dispute between them, Sher's deputy named Nogazil (? Nawāzish) Khan by the Portuguese, captured the place, but he himself was taken captive by Nuno Fernandiz Freire, chief of the Portuguese colony at Chittagong. Nogazil later on managed to escape and perhaps reconquered the port on the withdrawal of the Portuguese admiral Sampayo to Pegu at the end of the winter.[1] Thus Sher's authority was reestablished over the country comprising Gaur and Sharifabad, Sātgānw and Chittagong. In the far-eastern corner of Bengal the stretch of country between the Brahmaputra and the Surma was outside the pale of his authority. In this region known in popular parlance as the Bhatti, a chief named Barbak Shāh, son of Humayun Shāh struck coins in his own name and exercised independent sway. If the find-spots of the coins can be taken as an index to the jurisdiction of his rule, Eastern Mymensingh and Sylhet were not then included within the ambit of his territory.[2]

Battle of Bilgram

In the interval of making administrative arrangements for Bengal, Sher hastened on his preparations for the inevitable contest with Humayun. He collected a flotilla of boats and commenced operations against Mahāratha, the Chero chief, in order to pluck out the thorn in his rear. Against the Mughal he planned a double-fisted blow ; one was delivered by Qutb Khan from the south-west of Agra, but his death in fighting against Qasim Husain Sultan and Yadgar Nasir Mirza left Sher alone to undertake the campaign against Humayun. He reached Kanouj in April 1540 and had the first tussle with the enemy at the Bhojpur ferry, 31 miles north-west of Kanouj, where he foiled the Mughal attempt to cross the river by the destruction of the bridge.[3] Thereupon Humayun reached Kanouj by marching along the west bank of the Ganges, and Sher confronted him on the other side of the river.

Humayun again waited for sometime before striking the blow. In the meantime, many eminent warriors *e.g.* Muhammad Sultan Mirza, his sons Ulugh Mirza and Shah Mirza deserted and the defection of the corps of three thousand auxiliaries furnished by Kāmrān threatened to

1 Campos, *History of the Portuguese*, pp. 42-43.

2 IMC, vol. II, p. 88, p. 182; *Bengal, Past and Present*, vol. XXXV, July 1929, p. 18. N. B. Roy, *The successors of Sher Shah*, p. 39.

3 A.N. Eng. trans. p. 349-50. The Eng, tran on p 350 "the plan of the campaign was that etc." connotes a sense very different from that conveyed by the original.

dissolve his army. (A.N. Eng. Trans. 1, 350; Badauni, Eng. Trans. 1, 462). As Mirza Haidar says, "everybody began to desert and the most surprising part of it was that may of those who deserted did not go over to Sher Khan. An excited feeling ran through the army and the cry was, "let us go and rest in our homes." (Tar. Rashidi, Eng. Trans. 474). To arrest the desertion the army was taken across the river,[1] but unluckily for Humayun, the rains began unusually early that year, flooding the Mughal camp pitched on a low ground and compelling its immediate removal to some elevated ground near by. Mirza Haidar marked out such a site on reconnaissance and a very discreet plan was formed to carry out the evacuation of the baggage and stores. It was agreed upon that the army should march out in full complement on two successive days to a certain point and wait there until mid-day when the transportation of baggage would take place. The tenth day of Muharrum, (17th May, 1540) was chosen for carrying this plan into execution, in anticipation of abstention from hostilities on the part of the Afghans on that auspicious day. (Tar. Rashidi, Eng. Trans. 475, A.N. Eng. Trans. 1, 351).

Accordingly the mighty army computed at 40,000 by Mirza Haidar, exclusive of camp-followers and servants, and 90,000 by Jauhar (Eng. Trans. 20), issued out of the camp. Grouped in four divisions the van under Mirza Hindal, the right under Mirza Askari, the left under Yadgar Nāsir Mirza, the centre under Humayun and his *Dost* Mirza Haidar, and the artillery consisting of seven hundred swivel-guns, each drawn by eight bullocks, placed before the centre, the army looked formidable, surging, in Mirza Haidar's words " like the waves of the sea" and easily out-matched the Afghan force reckoned at only 15,000 men. (Tar. Rashidi, Eng. Trans. 476).

As the Mughul army came out to effect the planned manouvre, Sher at once gave the signal for an assault, and Jalāl Khan who commanded the van flung himself upon Mirza Hindal, before the Mughals could take up their appointed places and draw up the artillery.[2] In course of this attack Jalāl was unhorsed and pushed back. About the same time Yadgar Nāsir Mirza charged the Afghan right commanded by Mubāriz Khan, Bahādur Khan and Rāi Husain Julwāni and pressed it back.

[1] According to the Afghan sources Humayun crossed the river on a challenge from Sher but Mirza Haidar who personally conducted the battle tells a different story which has been accepted by us.

[2] Tarikh-i-Rashidi, p. 475 *Makh* MS. pp. 36-37, Dorn *History of the Afghans*, p. 127.

It was a critical moment for Sher, but that tried general kept his head and promptly seconded the distressed divisions by reinforcements from the centre and by a personal charge. (A.N. Eng. Trans. 1, 352). This timely succour steadied the retreating divisions which again rolled onward driving in a mass the Mughal officers and their followers upon the centre. Meanwhile, the left wing of the Afghan army commanded by Khawās Khan, Baramjit Gaur and other chiefs, pierced their way across the right into the rear of the Mughal camp, driving the hordes of camp followers that had been busy packing and loading, to the centre which alone stood firm behind the barricade of the artillery carriages. But under the pressure of the immense mass of runaways from the rear, the right and the left, the centre also gave way. Thus the impact of the multitudinous hosts of *ghulams* and retainers (whose number can be measured from the fact that the Emperor himself was attended by 1,000 of them on the day of action) broke the centre and rendered the massive artillery infructuous. No wonder in these circumstances Mirza Haidar's indignation mixed with grief broke out in such words as these : "the Chagtai army 40,000 strong was defeated by 10,000 Afghans on a battle-field where not a man, either friend or foe was wounded; not a gun was fired and the chariots were useless."

There now ensued a headlong flight of the Mughals; swarms of them ran helter-skelter to the Ganges which was at a distance of four miles. They hurried the Emperor along with them, and void of all thought plunged into the Ganges men and horses, officers and troopers, together. An immense number of them perished, the Emperor reached the other side of the stream on the back of an elephant, but had to be lifted on the steep bank by means of a hand-hold improvised by binding together several turbans. He then mounted a horse and rode away to Agra bare-headed and bare-footed. (Jauhar, Eng. Trans. 21-22). Such was the battle of Bilgram that transferred the sceptre of India to the hands of the Afghans.

Sher who had been the ruler of Bengal, now became the Emperor of India, and his doings henceforth fall outside the scope of our narrative. It deserves mention, however, that Bengal was the pivot of Sher's power and offered him the crown of India, as it did to the British later on. It was Bengal which Sher claimed in his negotiations at Chausa ; it was the treasure of Bengal that enabled Sher to maintain an army "as numerous as ants and locusts ;" it was again the Bengali fleet that rowed up to Kanouj and intercepted the passage of the Mughals at Bhojpur. Hence, the inclusion of the Chausa and Bilgram campaigns within the compass of the provincial history of Bengal.

Bengal under Sur Sultans of Delhi

After his accession to the throne of Delhi, Sher's attention was again called to the affairs of Bengal in March 1541 A.D. on account of the pretensions of Khizr Khan Turk, governor of Bengal, who married the daughter of Sayyid Mahmud Shah, the late Sultan of Bengal and gave himself royal airs by ascending an elevated seat (*Toki*) in the manner of the independent Bengali Sultans (Elliot, iv, 390-91). Sher quickly marched from the Salt Range to Gaur and forced Khizr Khan to submit; he was deprived of office and put in chains and a new order was inaugurated in Bengal by its partition into many small units. Ever since the commencement of Muslim rule, Bengal had been the most intractable of the provinces; its capital was nick-named Bulghakpur (the Rebellious City), very difficult to be kept in the leading-strings of Delhi. Sher endeavoured to cure this political malady by dividing it into a number of fiefs (jagirs) under his favourites, and vesting the general superintendence over the whole province in a Muslim doctor of Law, Qazi Fazilat. There is thus hardly any justification for the statement that Sher's political divisions corresponded to the 19 sarkars of Akbar's time. It may not however be wrong to infer that the jagirs created by Sher became the nucleus of those petty principalities that waged a stubborn warfare against the Mughals, during Akbar's and Jahangir's reigns. Bengal had a share of the general tranquillity that prevailed in India during his time. The Grand Trunk Road that stretched up to the Indus began at Sonārganw, but the erection of *sarais*, separately for Hindus and Muslims and mosques at the interval of a *kos* is, so far as Bengal is concerned, surely pure fiction, like the story of the old decrepit woman carrying a basket of gold ornaments on her head unmolested.

Bengal, particularly the eastern part of it, had become a land of adventure and romance in the 16th century. The Afghans, the Maghs, and the Portuguese all sought here the field for their enterprise and energy. During the reign of Islam Shah (1545-1553 A.D.) one of such adventurers who came to Bengal was Kālidās Gajdāni, a Bais Rajput converted to Islām under the name of Sulaiman Khan, who carved out an independent principality in the Bhāti region comprising the north-eastern portion of the Dacca and Mymensingh districts. His royal pretensions provoked Islām Shah to send Tāj and Dariyā Khan who tracked him to his inaccessible base and forced him to submit after hard fighting. Sulaiman could not long remain quiet; the abundant fertility of Bengal again bred ambitious designs in his brain, whereupon Tāj and Dariyā Khan returned at

the head of an army, treacherously murdered him at a private interview, and made an example of him by selling his sons Isā and Ismail to Turani merchants.

If the Assamese genealogies and *buranjis* are to be trusted, Kālāpāhār (Black rock) brother of Sikandar Sur during this reign launched upon that career of temple-breaking which has made his name a by-word of terror. It is said that he invaded Kāmrup in 1547-1549 A.D. (?) and demolished the temples of Hājo and Kāmakshyā. This barbarity is said to have been avenged later on (about 1563 A.D.) by an invasion of Gaur by Naranārāyan, the Kuch King of Kamtā.

CHAPTER IX

LAST AFGHAN SULTANS, 1553-1575

I. BENGAL UNDER THE SURS, 1539-1564

At the end of the year 1539, Sher Shāh had made Bengal once again a dependency of the Empire of Delhi; but this political connection remained unbroken only during his short reign of five years and his son's rule of eight years. After the death of Islām Shāh Sur (30th October, 1553) came the dissolution of the new Afghan empire and Bengal was one of its first limbs to break off. Islām Shāh's boy-son Firuz was murdered after a few days of kingship by Sher Shāh's nephew Mubāriz Khan, who seized the sceptre under the title of Muhammad Shāh 'Ādil (popularly called *'Ādili*). It was beyond his power to control the turbulent Afghan nobles. There was a faction fight at his Court in his very presence, with heavy mutual slaughter among the Afghan chiefs. Of the survivors many took to flight to save themselves and broke out in rebellion in their respective provinces. (*Makh.* 102-108).

HOUSE OF SHAMSUDDIN MUHAMMAD SUR

The Sur viceroy of Bengal at this time (1553) was Muhammad Khan (of the same clan). He declared his independence, took the title of Shamsuddin Muhammad Shāh Ghāzi, and raided Arracan, occupied Jaunpur and advanced towards Agra, but was slain by the royal general Himu at Chhapar-ghāt (Chhapar Mau), 30 miles east of Kalpi, *c.* December 1555. After this victory 'Adili appointed Shāhbāz Khan as his governor of Bengal. But Shamsuddin's son Khizr Khan, immediately after his father's death crowned himself at Jhusi (opposite Allahabad), took the title of Ghiyās-ud-din Bahādur Shāh, and later in the year (1556) invaded Bengal, overcoming Shāhbāz Khan and making himself master of that province.

During this year events were happening elsewhere in India which were ultimately to change the political destiny of Bengal, though no soldier or chief from that province took part in them. The Timurid heir Humāyun Pādishāh after recovering the Panjab and Delhi from the Afghan Sultān Sikandar Sur, died on 26th January, 1556, and

his son Ākbar crowned himself Emperor of Delhi three weeks later. Then came the final trial of arms, when at Pānipat on the 5th of November, 'Ādili's general Himu was defeated and slain and the Mughal sceptre placed beyond challenge. Of the Sur leaders, Ibrāhim was driven into Bundelkhand, Sulaimān was blockaded in the Siwālik hills, and 'Ādili himself, now without a Himu to guard him, was defeated and slain by the Bengal Sultān Ghiyāsuddin Bahādur Shāh at the village of Fathpur, 4 miles west of Surajgarh (April, 1557). Well could Ābul Fazl exult at "the wonderful fortune which occurred to the Mughal Empire from the mutual contentions of its (Afghan) enemies." (*Ak.* ii. 90).

The victorious Bengal Sultān pushed on towards Jaunpur, but was defeated and plundered of his camp and baggage by the Mughal general Khān-i-Zamān, then posted in Oudh. (Al B. ii. 18). Thenceforth he kept within his own limits, till his death in 1560. He had the wisdom to make friends with Khān-i-Zamān, the Mughal representative on his north-western frontier, in the Jaunpur province.

The last years of Ghiyās-ud-din I (Bahādur Shāh)[1] were spent in peace, broken only by unremembered campaigns against the petty local chiefs who had set up for themselves in many districts of the dismembered north-eastern provinces of the Sur empire after 1553. (It was *muluk-ut-tawāif* all over India, as *Riyāz*, p. 153, has aptly put it). His brother Jalāl-ud-din Sur, or Jalāl Shāh, succeeded him with the title of Ghiyās-ud-din II (1560) and continued his wise policy of not provoking the Mughal empire, as his own position was precarious owing to the restless turbulence and duplicity of the Karrāni family who had wrested a home for themselves in Bengal and Bihar. In 1563, this Ghiyās-ud-din died, and his son (name unknown, no coin issued), was murdered after seven months by a man calling himself Ghiyās-ud-din III, who reigned for a year, after which he was killed by Tāj Khān Karrāni and the blood-dripping sceptre of Bengal passed into the hands of the Karrāni family (1564). The provincial anarchy was stamped out by the new dynasty. (*Ak.* ii. 477).

[1] During the reign of Ghiyas-ud-din Bahadur Shah, a Jami' masjid was built at Rajmahal, a second mosque at Kusumba in the Rajshahi district, and a third at Kalna (Burdwan district). In his brother Jalāl-ud-din's time Khan Jahan built a gateway to the shrine of Niamatullah at Gaur and at Sherpur Murcha (Bogra district) a Jami' masjid was erected (960 A.H.).

II. The Karrāni Dynasty

The Karrānis (better known in Afghanistan by the name *Karlānis*) are one of the principal branches of the Pathāns, and their eponymous progenitor was the first cousin of the founder of the famous Tarin clan. Their home was in Bangash (modern *Kurram*), and here the tribesmen later became devoted followers of the Roshaniya heresy. (Rose's *Glossary,* ii. 476. iii. 223. .*Hist. of Afghans,* by Dorn, ii. 54-56).

Tāj Khan Karrāni was one of the chief officers of Sher Shāh. When anarchy and murder broke out in the Court of 'Ādili at Gwalior (1553), he fled from that city and set up for himself in the Gangetic Doab. 'Ādili gave him chase and defeated him at Chhibrā-Mau (18 miles south of Farrukhābād). The defeated Khan turning east by way of Chunār, joined his brothers 'Imād, Sulaimān and Ilyās, who held *jāgirs* in Khawāspur[2] Tāndā and some other villages on the bank of the Ganges. They strengthened themselves by seizing the public revenue, plundering the villages and capturing a hundred elephants of the Sultān which were stationed in the sub-divisions. Large numbers of Afghan adventurers joined these rebels, but near Chunār, 'Ādili's general Himu by a sudden and vigorous attack crushed the rebel army (1554). Tāj and Sulaimān fled to Bengal, where in the course of ten years, by combined force and fraud they gained possession of much of western Bengal (Gaur) in addition to the south-eastern districts of Bihar, which had fallen into a state of anarchy owing to the eternal internecine wars among the now kingless Afghan chiefs. (*Makh.* 116-120).

Tāj Khan died within a year of his gaining the Bengal throne, which then passed into the hands of his brother Sulaimān, who had been already governing Bengal as his deputy.

III. Sulaimān Karrāni

Sulaimān Karrāni reigned over Bengal for eight years (1565-1572). The Bengal Sultanate acquired an unwonted strength under this dynasty and became for a time the one dominating power in north-eastern India, from the Kuch frontier to Puri in Orissa and from the Son to the Brahmaputra. The extinction of the various branches of the Sur royal house left Sulaimān Karrāni without any

[2] *Khawāspur* is 12 miles west of the mouth of the Teliāgarhi pass and one mile south of Kārāgolā, where the Kosi falls into the Ganges from the north. (Rennell, pl. 15-16). *Tāndā* is about 15 miles south-east of Māldā town.

possible rival in Hindustan beyond the eastern frontier of the Mughal Empire which had then halted at the Son river. His watchful opportunist policy and shrewd use of aggression and diplomatic suppleness alike—which Abul Fazl miscalls his "hypocritical manner and fraud,"—carried out through a long and internally tranquil reign, brought to him a remarkable increase of territory, treasure and armed forces. Delhi and Oudh, Gwalior and Allahabad having fallen to the Mughals, the Afghan soldiery found their sole refuge and means of subsistence under their fellow-clansmen in Bengal. Hence there was a vast gathering of the last survivors of Sher Shāh's veteran army under Sulaimān's banners. He built up a rich treasury by raiding Orissa and Kuch Bihar, and extended his hold over the unsubdued Bengal districts north and east of his capital at Tāndā (south of Gaur).

His ownership of the home of the best elephants in India enabled him to increase his force of these animals to more than a thousand. Nothing could oppose these huge moving battering rams except the Turki mounted archers following Parthian tactics and the improved musketeers of Ākbar mounted on other elephants. Witness how the Bengal Afghan army defeated and made captive of the ever-victorious Kuch prince Shukladhwaj.

With these irresistible troops Sulaimān made himself supreme over North-eastern India. The peace which he was able to enforce on this fertile province rapidly increased his revenue, and he devoted his leisure to promoting his subjects' happiness by doing justice, patronising Muslim scholars and holy men and enforcing the Qurānic law of conduct by his personal example and regulations. (Al. Bad. ii. tr. 166. *Makh.* 123).

In his foreign relations he was equally successful. He took care to avoid giving the least offence to the Mughal Emperor and placated Ākbar's viceroys on his western border, like Khān-i-Zamān and Khān-i-Khānān, by means of friendly communications and rich presents. Sulaimān had Ākbar's name read from the pulpit as his suzerain and himself never sat on the throne nor stamped his own coins, nor assumed any other mark of royalty,—though he styled himself *Alā Hazrat* (His Exalted Presence) and behaved to others with the dignity of a king.

The success of his reign, especially in diplomacy, was mostly due to his jewel of a wazir, Ludi Khan, who combined the greatest fidelity to his master with keen political insight, wise moderation and unfailing tact. So long as Ludi lived, he kept the unruly ignorant Afghan captains out of foolish adventures that would have ruined their Bengal monarchy. (*Ak.* ii. 478-'9).

The great Orissa kings Purushottam-dev and Pratāp Rudra-dev of the Gajapati dynasty had been followed by weak successors, under whom that kingdom became a scene of baronial revolt, palace murders and usurpations of the throne which tempted Muslim invasion from Bengal. Chakra Pratāp-deva had been poisoned (1557) by his son Narsingh Jenā who was soon afterwards killed, and another son, Raghurām Jenā, placed on the throne by the minister Harichandan Mukund-dev, better known as Telinga Mukund-dev. In 1560-61, the king-maker threw off the mask, assumed the crown and began to reign in his own name. The usurper's strong and able hands kept the anarchy down for a time.

Ibrāhim Sur, the luckless rival of 'Ādili, after his failure everywhere, had finally sought asylum in Orissa about 1559 and lived there on some lands granted to him by the Rajah, who steadily refused to surrender him to the Bengal Sultans. In 1665, Mukund-dev had welcomed an embassy from Akbar, sworn allegiance to the Mughal throne, and promised to send Ibrāhim on an invasion of Bengal in case Sulaimān Karrāni rose against the Delhi Government. The Rajah had once penetrated to Sātgānw (near Hughli) in South Bengal and there built a *ghāt* on the Ganges.

In the winter of 1567-68, while Akbar was engaged far away in the siege of Chitor, Sulaimān sent an expedition to Orissa under his son Bāyazid and a valiant deserter from the Mughal side named Sikandar Uzbak. This force advanced through the jungles of Chota Nagpur and Mayurbhanj. Mukund-dev had relaxed his energy by this time; he deputed two of his officers, Chhota Rai and Raghubhanja to meet the attack; but these traitors seduced the troops from their loyalty and turned to attack their own master. Mukund-dev took refuge in Kotsama fort and bought the aid of a Pathan contingent from Bāyazid. In the battle that followed with the rebels, both Chhota Rai and Mukund-dev were slain. Rām-chandra-bhanja (the commandant of Sārang-garh),—in some books named Durgā-bhanja, now seized the throne, but Sulaimān Karrāni got possession of his person by treachery and killed him. In the same way he induced Ibrāhim Sur to surrender and murdered him too (1568). Orissa now passed into Muslim possession in spite of local risings here and there.

From the neighbourhood of Jājpur (the then capital of North Orissa), the invading Afghan army sent off a strong detachment under Kālāpāhār (*alias* Rāju) to raid the temple of Jagannāth which was famous for the wealth accumulated in it. This body of hardy picked cavalry made such a rapid dash through the country that the surprise was complete; the royal house of Orissa had then fallen

into confusion and weakness, military defence was neglected, no outpost on the way was held in force or offered the least resistance, and the people of Puri themselves were so lulled into security by centuries of freedom from foreign attack on their holy city that they disbelieved the first reports that the Muslims were coming; they replied, "What sort of strange creatures are these Musalman people? And can they have the power to harm this god?" A large number of Brahman women, with all their ornaments on, who had taken shelter in the temple, were seized without a fight and dragged into captivity. Niamatullah tells us that "Sulaimān dismantled the temple of Jagannāth (probably a part only) and ordered the image of Krishna, which was adorned with many kinds of ornaments and jewels, and all its limbs were made of gold and its two eyes formed by diamonds,—to be broken into pieces and thrown into a filthy place. Seven other idols of gold, of various shapes, placed around it and each weighing five Ākbari *maunds,* were brought away by the raiders . . . . There was none among the partakers in this campaign who did not bring away as booty one or two gold images." (*Makhzan,* 121-122).

Half-a-century before Sulaimān's accession a new Power had been born in the extreme north of Bengal. Bishwa Singha had founded the present dynasty of Kuch Bihar and assumed the title of Kāmateshwar, as if he continued the traditions of the lately destroyed ancient dynasty of Kamatapur. He extended his kingdom right and left, but took care to be on good terms with the Bengal Sultans on his south and the Ahom Rajahs on his east. His second son Nara Nārāyan (*c.* 1538-1587) and third son Shukladhwaja (surnamed Chilā Rāi or "the Kite Prince") spread his conquests far and wide.

Encouraged by a long succession of victories in the north-eastern corner, the Kuch king invaded the dominions of Sulaimān Karrāni (1568), but Fortune at last deserted him, the Afghans defeated his hitherto invincible general Chilā Rāi and held him prisoner. "The Muhammadans ascended the Brahmaputra as far as Tezpur, but they made no attempt to take permanent possession of the country and returned to Bengal, after demolishing the temples at Kāmakhyā, Hājo and other places. All local traditions point to the redoubtable Brahman renegade and iconoclast, Kālāpāhār, as the leader of the Muhammadan army." (Gait, 54). After some years of captivity, the Kuch prince was set free, evidently when the Pathan wazir Miān Ludi decided to secure a strong friend on his northern frontier in view of the inevitable contest with the Mughal Empire which was coming nearer and nearer. The counter-

attack had carried Sulaimān to the very gates of the Kuch capital, which he besieged, but the news of a rising in Orissa forced him to withdraw with his army. (*Riyāz,* 153).

Sulaimān Karrāni died on 11th October 1572, and was succeeded by his eldest son Bāyazid, who quickly estranged the proud self-willed Afghan nobles by his insolence, harshness and extortions. (*Riyāz-us-salātin,* p. 153, by a characteristic mistake, has transferred Bāyazid's low character to the wise and pious Sulaimān). A conspiracy was formed, and Hansu, the nephew and son-in-law of Sulaimān, in concert with the malcontented Lohānis murdered Bāyazid, but was himself seized and killed by Miān Ludi, the wazir of Sulaimān, and other loyal nobles.

IV. Dāud Karrāni

They raised Sulaimān's younger son Dāud to the throne. Both Bāyazid and Dāud, puffed up with vanity from their father's vast treasures and strong army, cast off their allegiance to Akbar and had their own names read from the pulpit and stamped on coins. Dāud in particular was a foolish hot-headed sensual youth, sunk in drunkenness and low pleasures. By oppressing and insulting the nobles and treacherously removing every kinsman who might prove a rival for the throne, he raised a host of enemies at home. Selfish nobles like Qutlu Lohāni and Gujar Karrāni poisoned his mind against Miān Ludi, whom even Abul Fazl admires as "the rational spirit of the country," and he made a fatal breach with this great and faithful servant of his house by killing Ludi's son-in-law Yusuf (the son of Tāj Khan). The disruption of the house of Karrāni now began. (*Makh.* 123).

When Dāud crowned himself in Bengal, Gujar Khan, the supreme general of the Afghans, set up the son of Bāyazid in Bihar. Dāud despatched Ludi Khan with a large army from Bengal against the pretender. But as the Mughal general Muni'm Khan (Khān-i-Khānān) had now by order of Akbar advanced to Bihar in order to take possession of that province, Ludi and Gujar made up their quarrel and bought Muni'm Khan off with presents and delusive promises of loyalty.

Dāud's murder of Ludi's son-in-law had set that great minister against him; so the Sultan marched from Bengal to put Ludi down, and succeeded in seducing many of the rebel partisans. By this time the Gujrat campaign being over, Akbar had returned to his capital (Agra) and he sent re-inforcements to Muni'm Khan who

marched into Bihar up to Tri-mohāni (just south of the horse-shoe bend where the Dewā or Saraju falls into the Ganges, about 12 miles north of Arrāh town). Just then, Dāud under the tuition of Qutlu Lohāni and Gujar Khan made a humble and pathetic appeal to Ludi Khan's fidelity to his dynasty, and thus luring him into his own camp had him murdered. Dissension broke out among the Afghan nobles which ruined their chance of strong opposition to the invaders. The Mughal army advanced by cautious and methodical marches to the neighbourhood of Patna, where Dāud had shut himself up.[1] Akbar himself arrived at the siege camp with a large flotilla carrying guns and huge war elephants, on 3rd August, 1574.

The quick eye of the Emperor perceived that the capture of the fort of Hājipur (facing Patna, on the north bank of the Ganges) would make Patna untenable. On the 6th Hājipur was taken after a few hours' assault and set on fire. In that blaze the garrison of Patna read their doom; and that very night Dāud slipped out of the fort and fled to Bengal by boat while Gujar Khan (his c-in-c) with all the troops retired by the land route. So great was the terror and confusion of the flight that many of the Afghans perished in the water.

The Mughal army entered the deserted fort of Patna next morning and secured "abundant booty in money, goods and especially noted elephants." A pursuit headed by Akbar himself immediately started, and in one day Dariyāpur (40 miles eastwards, midway between Patna and Mungir) was reached. On the way 265 elephants and huge quantities of abandoned property and treasure of the fugitive army were secured. But while Akbar returned, Muni'm Khan was sent on at the head of 20,000 men, on 13th August, to push into Bengal and crown the campaign with success without giving the Afghans time to rally. The vanquished army was too much cowed to make a stand. Surajgarh, Mungir, Bhagalpur, Kahlgāon fell in succession without a fight, and the Mughals reached Gunā (probably *Gurundā*) west of the Teliāgarhi pass, which Dāud had entrenched and held in force. But the Delhi cavalry, guided by the local zamindars made a detour through the Rājmahal hills and turned the Garhi pass on its southern side, while another force made a demonstration in front of it. Again the Afghans fled without a fight, and Muni'm Khan entered Tāndā the capital of Bengal, unresisted, on 25th September. (*Ak.* iii. 150-153).

[1] Daud's campaign: *Ak.* iii. 96-100, 115, 135-145, Al. Bad. ii. 181-184, *Makh.* 124; *Tabqat* (N. K. text), 314-320. Firishta (N. K. text), ii. 303-304,

CHAPTER X

FIRST MUGHAL CONQUEST OF BENGAL

I. Consequences of the Mughal Conquest on Bengal

When the conquering Chaghtāi Turks struck at the centre of the Sultanate of Delhi, they generated forces which completely changed the ethnic character of the Muslim population of Bengal and subverted the political life of Orissa. This violent impact sent the ruling Afghan population flying to the eastern extremity of the Ludi empire. Neither Babur during his busy four years on the Indian throne, nor Humayun during his hectic first term of ten years (1530-1540) succeeded in driving the Afghans from upper Hindustan into Bengal, because Bihar remained the easternmost home of the Afghan princes till the triumph of Sher Shah. It was Sher Shah who first read the future aright, and in his far-sighted political wisdom decided to make Bengal, with its proverbial wealth as a support and its equally proverbial bad climate as a barrier, the citadel of the last Afghan power, with the province of Bihar forming a shield on its western border. The forts of Rohtas and Chunar and his own revived city of Patna,—on the strategic point where the Ganges the Gandak and the Son meet together, entirely dominating the great river highway,—formed a screen of the strongest defensive power. If to these Jaunpur could be added, Bengal's western line of defence would run almost up to the Himalayas.

Sher Shah seized the capital of Bengal in June 1538, and the last Afghan ruler of the province yielded up his realm to the Mughals in 1576, and the last independent local chieftain of that race was killed in Sylhet in 1612. But during this interval Bengal became dotted with small baronies created by Afghan fugitives from upper India and the descendants of the princelings and ministers of the last Afghan Sultans from whom the Mughals had wrested the sovereignty of Bengal. The same Mughal push from the North drove the still unconquered martial power of the Bengal Afghan rulers into Orissa, and that province had at last to see the extinction of its long line of Hindu kings and the establishment of a new Pathan dominion. Though Afghan rule in Orissa was extinguished by Mān Singh (1592), the Afghans who had taken refuge there remained mostly in residence in their hamlets and towns, and today in the mouth

of the Orissa people the general name for a Muslim, of whatever race, is *Pathan.*

Another very large stream of the defeated Afghans flowed from Orissa, by way of the coast and East Bengal, into the province of Sylhet and greatly augmented the existing rural population of the same faith who had been converted to Islam centuries ago by Shah Jalāl and other missionaries of the crescent. Thus, we find among the old landed proprietors of Bengal even today such historic Afghan clan names as Ghaznavi and Pani, Yusufzai and Sur.

Up to the middle of the 16th century, Orissa had been a purely Hindu country, both in its royal house and in its population. A clear light is thrown on the territorial demarcation between the two creeds by the Life of Chaitanya, where we read that at the time of that saint's journey to Jagannath-Puri the last outpost of Muslim rule was Pichaldah on the Mantreshwar river, while south of it began Hindu Orissa without a single permanent Muslim settler. All this was changed by Sulaimān Karrāni's invasion in 1568 and the southward rush of Islam into Orissa was intensified after Akbar's victory over Dāud in 1575.

Mughal conquest opened for Bengal a new era of peace and progress. It re-established that contact with upper India,—and through upper India by the land-route with the countries of Central Asia and Western Asia,—which Bengal had lost first when Buddhism became dead in the land of its birth and next when its Muslim viceroys threw off the overlordship of Delhi. The narrow isolation which thus afflicted Bengal about 1339 was broken once a year by the visit of a ship or two from Malay and far more rarely from Zanzibar, which brought to our shores the commodities and cultural envoys of the outer Muslim world. But with the opening of the 16th century this sea-borne traffic was endangered and all but stopped. Goa became the seat of a European Power planted on the Indian soil (1510) and the Portuguese fleet soon imposed its dominance on the Indian Ocean, subjecting Arab and African, Indian and Malay ships to harassment and tribute. Less than a century after the Portuguese conquest of Goa, Portuguese adventurers and their half-breed progeny,—no longer acting as authorised agents of the Government of Lisbon, but pirating for their own sake,—secured a lodgement in Arracan and Sondip and infested the Bay of Bengal and the lower estuary of the Ganges and the Brahmaputra. This all but scared away the entire Asiatic trade with Bengal by the sea-route.

It was only in 1666 that a Mughal viceroy broke up these foreign pirates' nest by conquering Chatgaon. The imperial peace

which had by this time settled on Bengal led to an immense increase of this province's maritime trade, but almost entirely through European agency. Thus Bengal gained a second line of free communication with the vast outer world, while officials, scholars, preachers, traders, artisans and soldiers continued to flock by the land-route from the heart of the Mughal empire into what had now become a regular well-administered province of that empire. The return current, generated by the same imperial peace and regular administration, was represented by the Vaishnav pilgrims and teachers who went from Bengal to Vrindavan, and beyond Vrindavan even to Jaipur and Kurukshetra ; and also by the much thinner stream of Bengal "candidates" for the public service or ambitious cadets of landed families or discontented litigants defeated in the provincial law courts who sought to improve their fortunes by a visit to the royal Court at Agra and Delhi.

The renaissance which we owe to English rule early in the 19th century had a precursor,—a faint glimmer of dawn, no doubt,—two hundred and fifty years earlier. "These were the fruits, the truly glorious fruits, of *Mughal* peace."

II. Dāud Karrani expelled from Bengal

Dāud fled to Orissa by way of Sātgānw (Hughli), and the Afghan captains scattered to the north-east and south of Bengal. From his base at Tāndā Muni'm Khan sent out strong detachments to Sātgānw (Hughli), Ghoraghat (Dinajpur-Bogra), Bakla (Bakarganj), Sonārgānw (Dacca) and Mahmudabad (Jessore-Faridpur) to establish imperial authority. In the Ghoraghat sub-division. Sulaimān Mankali the Afghan jagirdar was defeated and slain by Majnun Khan Qāqshāl and the broken remnants of his followers were driven into Kuch Bihar. In the south, Dāud's chief adviser Srihari (the father of Pratāpāditya) parted company with his master and took refuge in the maritime wilderness of Khulna. Thus in west, north central and south Bengal no organised Pathan power was left, though as yet no Mughal force or collector was posted in Pabna, Rangpur-Dinajpur, Mymensingh, Bhāwal (north Dacca), Jessore-Khulna or Barisal. Nor in the wilds of Bankura-Birbhum.

Burdwan was made the advanced base of the invaders, but their supreme commander took post at Tāndā, near the old city of Gaur in he Malda district.

Then the victors tired of their exertions and "thought only of taking their ease in that country." But Rajah Todar Mal came to

them from head quarters, and urged them to follow up Dāud into Orissa and end the war decisively. The army led by this Rajah advanced from Burdwan to Garh-Mandāran, in the Arambagh sub-division of the Hughli district, midway between Goghat and Basudevpur, and some eight miles due west of Arambagh. Here spies brought the report that Dāud had faced about at Debra-Kasari (not Kasiari, 22 miles south-west of Midnapur city). Todar Mal called up reinforcements from his chief, and on their arrival marched from Mandāran to Koliā.[1] Dāud then fell back on Garh-Haripur, eleven miles south-east of the Dantan station on the B. N. Railway.

The Rajah halted with his army at Midnapur. Here Muhammad Quli Barlas died, the Mughal troops were disheartened, disorder broke out among them as they objected to continuing this jungle campaign. So, Todar Mal beat a retreat to Mandāran. Meantime, the Khān-i-Khānān, on being informed of the detachment's retreat to Mandaran and the dissensions in the camp there, had pushed up reinforcements from Burdwan.

Todar Mal was now in a position to resume the offensive. From Mandaran the entire army advanced to Cheto, where the Khān-i-Khānān himself joined it. It was now learnt that Dāud had fortified his camp at Haripur by digging a deep trench around it and throwing up breastworks, in Afghan fashion. He had also barricaded the regular road from Midnapur southwards at strategic points, and as this road ran through a jungle the advancing Mughal army could be easily ambushed anywhere. The imperial soldiery were disheartened and refused to fight, clamouring for peace with the enemy. Todar Mal and the Khān-i-Khānān harangued and argued with them and cajoled them into a fighting mood. It was dangerous to go straight forward upon Dāud's position, and therefore the Mughal chiefs, helped by men with knowledge of the locality, discovered an obscure circuitous path. This route was improved by pioneers, and then the army, making a wide detour

[1] Movements before battle of Tukaroi,—*Ak.* iii. 169-174; Tabqat 324; Al. Bad. ii. 194. Battle,—*Ak.* iii. 176-180, Tabqat, 325-326. The fullest study of the battle with a large map of the site is given in my paper in *Bengal Past and Present.* No. 99 (1935) pp. 1-4. The hideously misprinted *Tabaqat-i-Akbari* (Newal Kishore Press lithographed Persian text) gives the name as Goaliar,—clearly a mistake for *Kolia.* There is a place spelt as *Colliah* in Rennell, sheet 7, 23 miles north-east of Midnapur, and almost midway between Mandaran and Midnapur city. Similarly, *Nanjura* has been misspelt as *Khabura, Bachora* etc. in *Tabaqat* and Al Badayuni, and *Debra Kasari* as *Din Kisari, Rin Kasari* etc.

by their left, *i.e.*, south-eastwards, arrived at Nanjura, a village close to the Contai-Midnapur road and 11 miles east of the Dantan railway station.

Thus Dāud's flank was turned and his rear could be cut by one day's march. He had already sent off his family and *impedimenta* to Katak and lightened his force. He now advanced from his camp to challenge the enemy at their halting place. The encounter took place on the plain of Tukaroi, nine miles south-east of Dantan and 3 miles west of Nanjura, *i.e.*, 10 miles south of the angle formed by the B. N. Railway line and the branch road to Contai.

III. The Battle of Tukaroi Described
3 March, 1575

The Mughal chiefs had decided not to fight that day, as the stars were inauspicious. They had merely sent out the usual vedettes in front of their camp, when they were surprised to see the enemy rapidly advancing in full force. Muni'm Khan hurriedly ordered his troops to be drawn up in battle array. Dāud precipitated the battle with a furious charge of elephants in a long line under Gujar Khan, upon the Mughal vanguard. "As the tusks and necks of the elephants were covered with black yak-tails and the skins of the animals, they produced horror and dismay; the horses of the imperial van were frightened on seeing these extraordinary forms, and hearing the terrible cries, and turned back. Though the riders exerted themselves, they were not successful and the troops lost their formation." (*Akbarnamah*, iii, 176). Khan-i-'Alam was slain and his division was scattered. The impetus of the victorious Afghan van similarly broke the imperial *iltimsh* and even swept away the centre itself. Muni'm Khan and other officers fought desperately, receiving repeated wounds, but their followers "did not behave well." At last, the tide of fugitives swept away the commander-in-chief up to five miles behind the front. The Afghans of the vanguard, after pursuing him for half-a-mile, turned aside to plunder his camp; they even went beyond it and dispersed in the attempt to overtake the Mughal camp-followers who were trying to escape with their pack animals.

This ruined the Afghan cause. Dāud durst not follow up Gujar Khan's successful charge by pushing into the opening made by him in the Mughal centre and taking the imperial left wing in

flank, as he feared that the retreat of the Khān-i-Khānān was merely a ruse for luring him into the jaws of death between his enemies' two wings. The Afghan right wing under Sikandar merely made a half-hearted frontal demonstration against the Mughal left wing, but "fled without coming to blows," because here Todar Mal and other officers held their ground firmly and presented a bold front. When Dāud himself arrived in support of his right wing he could do no better. Meantime, the severely shaken Mughal divisions had been rallied; everywhere brave men had formed themselves into small knots and facing round were attacking the Afghans with arrows from horseback in Turk fashion. One of these missiles killed Gujar Khan, and thereafter the Afghan vanguard melted away in a minute. Muni'm Khan himself returned to the field and completed the rally of his side.

At the other extremity, the Afghan left wing had attacked and somewhat shaken the imperial right division; Shaham Khan, the commander of the latter, himself "lost firmness on hearing of the boldness of Gujar and of the confusion of the imperial (central) army, and was turning back." (*Akbarnamah*, iii, 178). But he was heartened by his braver subordinates, and this wing turned and fought the Afghans boldly. "In a short space of time the enemy (in front of them) was driven off and the victors proceeded against the (Afghan) centre." Threatened in front and left, with his vanguard dispersed beyond recall or sight, Dāud could not maintain the contest long; his ruin was completed when news came of the fall of Gujar Khan and the flight of his division. The entire Afghan army now broke and fled in hopeless rout. The Mughals gave chase slaying and plundering without opposition. "The plain became a tulip-garden from the blood of the slain."

Next day, the Mughal generalissimo, then in his 82nd year and suffering from senile decay (according to Abul Fazl), vented his wrath by killing all the prisoners taken and making "eight sky-high minarets with their brainless heads,"—in humble imitation of his master's progenitor Timur, who had "built his ghastly tower of eighty thousand human skulls."

The battle was a decisive victory for the Mughals, though so many of their higher officers were slain and wounded. Dāud Khan fled to Katak, unable to make a stand anywhere before the pursuing column under Rajah Todar Mal. On 12th April he came out of that fort and made a complete submission to the Khān-i-Khānān. (*Ak.* iii. 183-186. *Tabaqat.* 326).

When Dāud Karrāni laid down his sword at the feet of Muni'm Khan in the darbar tent at Katak, the ceremony merely proclaimed

the *de jure* annexation of Bengal to Akbar's empire; but the actual imposition of imperial peace and orderly Mughal administration on Bengal was still far off. That province remained for many years a scene of confusion and anarchy. The Mughal military officers held a few towns in Bihar and fewer still in Bengal, but these places were only the head-quarters of subdivisions (*sarkars*) and even in them the imperial authority was liable to challenge and expulsion from time to time. Outside these towns lay the vast no man's land, a constant prey to roving bands of dispossessed Afghan soldiery and Akbar's officers out on raid for their private gain. The local landlords utilised the eclipse of regular government to encroach on their neighbours' estates or to satisfy old grudges. There was a Mughal subahdar (*sipah-salar*) for Bihar and another for Bengal, but the authority of each was paralysed by the inadequacy of his forces and the disobedience, greed and mutual jealousies of his subordinates. The history of the years 1575-1594, is a sickening monotonous tale of local offensives with varying results but no final decision, and the temporary expansion and retreat of the imperial power, while the weak and the innocent suffered at the hands of both the parties.

The most successful of these enemies of peace was Junaid Karrāni (the first cousin of Dāud), who, acting independently from his base in Jharkhand, long troubled south Bihar and formed the rallying centre of rebels and malcontents.

Muni'm Khan, after his triumph over Dāud at Katak, had to hasten north in order to recover Ghoraghat, where the Mughal outpost had been driven out by Kālāpāhār, Bābu Mankali and other Afghan chiefs who had come back from Kuch Bihar during the viceroy's absence in Orissa. But the discomfort of life in tents in the swampy plain of Tāndā during the heavy monsoon of Bengal, induced the aged viceroy to reoccupy the ancient capital, Gaur. The damp unhealthy old buildings of that long deserted city bred an epidemic of which his officers and men died in hundreds, while others fled away to Bihar to save their lives. At last, conquering the lure of the fatal city, Muni'm Khan returned to Tāndā, where he died ten days later, on 23rd October, 1575. The conqueror of Bengal was over eighty years of age and his faculties had of late ceased to be in operation. Wild terror broke out among the surviving Mughal officers in Bengal and intensified their former lack of union. Enemies advanced against them from every side, and all the Mughal detachments first fell back on Gaur and then abandoned Bengal altogether,[1] retreating to Bhagalpur *en route* to Delhi!

[1] *Ak.* iii. 226-229. Al. Bad. ii. 220 Imperial campaign in S, Bihar, *Ak*, iii, 188, in N. Bihar 190-200 (under Muzaffar Kh.)

IV. Khān-i-Jāhān's viceroyalty, 1575-78

Akbar on hearing of Muni'm Khan's death had conferred the vacant viceroyalty of the province upon Husain Quli Beg entitled Khān-i-Jahān, and sent him off with Raja Todar Mal as his lieutenant (*c.* 15 November, 1575). The new viceroy ruled for three years; but though he gained many signal victories his regime was troubled by serious internal discord. He was a Shia and a Persian,[1] while most of the other imperial officers in Bengal were Sunnis and Turks. They refused to take their orders from a heretic (*rafizi*), but Todar Mal with his persuasive tongue, tactful dealing and more potent money gifts, patched up a working truce among them which ensured the reconquest of Bengal.

The new viceroy on his arrival found the situation truly alarming: Dāud had risen in Orissa, taken Bhadrak and Jaleshwar and reoccupied the whole of Bengal. Isa Khan had driven away the Mughal flotilla (under Shah Bardi) from the East Bengal rivers. Junaid Karrāni was as usual most active in mischief in south-east Bihar, and Gajapati Shah (the laird of Jagadishpur) had taken to highway robbery in the Arrah district. In Bihar, Muzaffar Khan Turbati alone held his own in the Hajipur district by means of strenuous and bloody fighting. Khān-i-Jahān had great difficulty even in persuading his terrorised officers to turn back from Bhagalpur towards Bengal! However, his personality and Todar Mal's diplomacy at last bore fruit. (*Ak.* iii. 229-231).

The Mughals advanced; Teliagarhi was easily recovered and its Afghan commandant slain in cold blood. Dāud fell back on Rajmahal and Khān-i-Jahān lay for months facing him in carefully prepared trenches. The stalemate was ended by Akbar ordering his Bihar army to go to the aid of his Bengal forces and sending boats laden with treasure and war material to Khān-i-Jahān. The land line of communication across the Son and through Bhojpur was cleared by detaching the famous general Shahbaz Khan from Court to suppress Gajapati. (*Ak.* iii. 239).

On 10th July, 1576, the Bihar army joined Khān-i-Jahān in the camp before Rajmahal, and two days later was fought a stubborn and long-wavering battle in which the Afghans were utterly defeated with the loss of all their leaders: Junaid was killed by a cannon-ball, Jahan Khan (the governor of Orissa) was slain, and Dāud was taken prisoner and beheaded as a "treaty-breaker;" Kālāpāhār

[1] Really a Qizzilbāsh, or member of a Turkish tribe long settled in Persia.

fled away wounded, and so did Qutlu Lohani, the sole survivors. Thus "Bengal came once again into imperial possession." (*Akbarnamah*, iii, 256). In south-west Bihar, Shahbaz was equally successful; Gajapati was chased from place to place, and forced to abandon his guns, boats and other goods to plunder. The imperialists cut down the Bhojpur jungles and devastated Jagadishpur, capturing Gajapati's family and household property, as well as many of his mud-forts, and the campaign was crowned by the surrender of Rohtas fort to the Emperor on terms. (*Ak.* iii. 260-266).

In Bengal, Khān-i-Jahān pushed on to Sātgānw (Hughli) and crushed the Afghan bands roving there, especially that of Mahmud Khan Khas-khel (popularly, called *Mati*) who kept possession of Dāud's treasures and family. Internal discord broke out among the vanquished, and one leader Jamshid was killed by his rivals. At last Dāud's mother Naulakha and other members of his family surrendered to Khān-i-Jahān in Goas parganah (north Murshidabad). Mati, too, came to offer submission, but was put to death, evidently to enable the viceroy to appropriate Dāud's treasures then in his keeping.

The viceroy had to advance to Bhawal (the north Dacca district) as his admiral Shah Bardi had turned defiant and two Afghan chiefs,—Ibrāhim Maral and Karim-dad Musazai,—had begun a fresh rising there. All three submitted when Khān-i-Jahān reached the scene. A detachment from his army moving up the Lakhia to Egarasindur, defeated Isa Khan, who fled away after abandoning much material and wealth to the victors. An attack by Majlis Dilāwar and Majlis Qutb (misprint *Pratap*) ended in a rout of the Mughal flotilla, but the fugitives reached safety through the help of a loyal zamindar named Tila Ghazi. After this Khān-i-Jahān returned to Sihhatpur, in the suburbs of Tāndā, where he had founded a city, and there he died after a long illness, on 19th December, 1578. (*Ak.* iii. 327-328, 349, 376-381.)

V. Mughal captains mutiny in Bihar and Bengal

In April, 1579, a new viceroy[1] reached Bengal from Akbar's court. He was Muzaffar Khan Turbati, already known to us for his heroic deeds in Bihar. But evidently his mental powers had

[1] During the interim Bengal had been governed by Ismail Quli, the brother of the deceased Khān-i-Jahān. Muzaffar Kh. Turbati in Bengal,—*Ak.* iii. 386 (new official cadre, 413), 417-423 (Bihar officers rebel), 429-433. (causes of mutiny against Muzaffar), 427-434, 442-450 (Bengal officers' revolt.) 451-454, 460 (Bihar events during mutiny.) Al. Bad. ii. 289-290.

now deteriorated and he had lost his former clearness of vision and rapid power of decision. The sad tale of his viceroyalty ended in his murder at the hands of his own mutinous officers after one year only.

Muzaffar Khan's administration was doomed to tragic failure by a political convulsion which arose from circumstances beyond his control, but whose evil effect was aggravated by his habitual wavering and want of tact. The Mughal empire had now reached a most important stage in its evolution. The wisdom of Akbar perceived that the age of conquest was over and the more beneficent and enduring work of administration must begin. He decided to divide his empire into twelve provinces, called *subahs*, and give to each the same type of regular administration, under the same necessary classes of officers with division of functions in specialised departments. Along with the new viceroy (*sipah-salar*, later called *subahdar*) Muzaffar Khan, he sent from his capital a staff of departmental heads.—Diwan, Bakhshi, Mir 'Adl, Sadar, Kotwal, Mir Bahar and Waqa'navis. These were charged to build up the new administration and to establish official routine in the place of the arbitrary personal rule which necessarily marks every period of conquest and martial law. They were also to settle the revenue by the new method now ordered to be adopted all over the empire and to protect the interests of the State by resuming unauthorised alienations of land and stopping the usual military fraud of false musters for which the remedy was the branding of the horses in every officer's due contingent.

During the rule of the Karrānis Bengal had enjoyed a fair amount of internal peace and great wealth had accumulated in the hands of the ruling classes in consequence. All this now became the prey of the Mughal conquerors. The various imperial generals posted at different places in Bengal and Bihar gathered an immense amount of treasure by plunder and extortion and their one thought was, as Abul Fazl admits, how to carry away their pile of gains from this pestilential climate. In fact, their conduct exactly resembled that of Napoleon's marshals in Spain. The work of the Emperor suffered from their selfish greed and disobedience to the local viceroy, who was not strong enough to coerce them. And now within a few months a storm burst over Bengal and Bihar from the attempt of the newly arrived civil officers to bring the imperial captains there to account and stop their illegal gains. The laudable reforming zeal of these officers was rendered barren of result by their precipitation, insolence of office, lack of moderation and tactlessness,—to which Abul Fazl rightly adds the love of corrupt gain on

the part of many of the pay and branding officers themselves. The result was a mutiny of the military officers in these two provinces,—some overt, others concealed,—against the attempt at muster and branding and the restitution of unauthorised revenue collection and land usurpation.

The men in Bihar set the first example. The Bengal officers bent on rebellion left Tāndā on 19th January, 1580 and nine days later openly declared their rebellion. They were secretly backed by the partisans of Akbar's brother Mirza Hakim, the ruler of Kabul, whom the malcontents conspired to place on the throne of Delhi as a more orthodox Muslim and a softer tool than the strong and free-thinking Akbar. Muzaffar Khan sent a large force against the rebels, and the two armies lay facing each other across the Ganges at Rajmahal for some time, after which the Bihar mutineers, alarmed by reports of the approach of fresh troops from the Emperor's Court formed a league with their brethren in Bengal. They got possession of Teliagarhi through Muzaffar Khan's supine delay. A Bengal rebel force crossed the Ganges at Rajmahal and joined the new arrivals from Bihar.

After daily skirmishing for 19 days, one morning the imperialists were completely defeated through the superior numbers of the enemy and above all by the imbecile hesitation and inaction of Muzaffar, who had "lost the thread of counsel and became foolish from suspiciousness and want of heart. He neither would himself arrange the troops, nor would give permission to engage to the officers who were everywhere ready for service." The result was a military disaster; Muzaffar took refuge in the fort of Tāndā, but all deserted such a hopeless leader; and next morning the rebels swarmed into the fort and began to plunder the enormous accumulated treasures of the imperial officers lodged there. On 19th April, 1580, Muzaffar Khan Turbati was put to death by the rebels. The *khutba* was read in the name of Muhammad Hakim Mirza, and new offices, high titles and fiefs were lavishly distributed among the mutiny leaders on behalf of the new sovereign. "Countless vagabonds" were given the title of Khan with flags drums and nominal commands rising up to the grade of 10,000 horse! Baba Qaqshal was appointed viceroy of Bengal and Ma'sum Khan Kabuli as regent plenipotentiary (*wakil*) on behalf of the absent Hakim. Thus Bengal and Bihar were formally cut off from the empire of Akbar.

VI. Akbar recovers Bihar, 1580

The rebels hoped that they would now "spend their days in pleasure," but retribution was close at hand. The loyal troops first recovered Bihar.[1] There Bahadur Badakhshi (son of S'aid) had usurped the government of Tirhut, seized the public treasury and proclaimed himself king under the title of Bahadur Shah. But the loyal and brave Muhib Ali Khan of Rohtas, defeated Arab Bahadur and recovered the fort of Patna from rebel hands. At the news of the coming of a fresh army from Akbar's capital, desertion and flight broke out among the mutineers, while loyal officers and penitent rebels joined the advancing royalist army everyday. A vast force of loyalists thus came together near Patna and concord was established by vows among the nobles. Tarsun Khan and Todar Mal were their supreme commanders. Marching very cautiously, in constant readiness for battle, the imperialists reached Mungir (*c.* 19th May, 1580). The Bengal rebels advanced from Garhi to give battle. But Todar Mal, not being sure whom he could really trust, decided to stand on the defensive, by fortifying his camp round which walls were raised and a moat dug (28th May). On 7th June the rebels appeared outside and began skirmishing. The first success of the imperialists was their capture of 300 enemy boats laden with munitions west of Mungir, and thus their connection with Patna was kept open. Loyal officers harassed the enemy by cutting off their convoys of grain and cattle out at grass. Meantime, Akbar had despatched a fresh army from his side on 26th June. When it arrived in Bihar, the rebel army facing Tarsun Khan and Todar Mal took to flight (25th July). Mungir and Patna were automatically relieved, but the monsoon now stopped the campaign for some months.

In south Bihar, an imperial detachment marching from Patna, against Ma'sum Khan Kabuli, took Bihar city, Gaya and Sherghati (end of September). Then Azam Khan Koka, whom Akbar had sent to Bihar joined the army after defeating Dalpat Shah, the successor of Gajapati of Jagadishpur. But jealousy and discord broke out between the two heads of the imperialists here,—Azam Khan and Shahbaz Khan, and the rebels gained some successes The imperial army however was now too strong, and many Bihar rebels began to flee to Bengal in search of safety.

[1] Recovery of Bihar, *Ak.* iii. 467-477, 485-490. For Gajpati, Al. Bad. ii. 244, 292-193. Renewal of revolt (1582), *Ak.* iii. 575, 586.

Todar Mal's first task was to restore peace and order in Bihar and then only advance for the reconquest of Bengal. But this necessary preliminary was delayed and Mughal arms were paralysed by the presumption and pride of Shahbaz Khan who refused to obey Azam Khan and set up an almost independent Court at Patna, while Azam Khan and Todar Mal stayed at Hajipur. Thus the latter were forced into inactivity and the recovery of Bengal was delayed by two years.

In Bengal, during this eclipse of the imperial authority, Murad Khan, the faujdar of Fathabad, died and his sons were murdered by a local zamindar (Mukund). Qiya Khan Hasan was poisoned in Orissa and the neighbouring landlords broke out in anarchy. Qutlu Lohani, a leading officer of Dāud, attempted with some success to revive the lost dominion of his master and for some years created a principality of his own in Orissa. He defeated Muhammad Nijat Khan (the faujdar of Hughli) at Salimabad and drove him to seek refuge with Pedro Tavares, a powerful Portuguese captain. He next defeated a second Mughal force near Mangalkot (north of Burdwan city). Another Kiya Khan (surnamed Kank) who had hitherto kept Orissa out of the mutiny, was at last attacked and killed by Qutlu, and that province was lost to the empire.

But fate was no kinder to the rebels either. Masum Khan Kabuli poisoned his rival Sharafuddin Husain who had moved into Bengal. Also, near Mungir the Bengal leader Bahadur Kheshgi was killed by Sādiq Khan, a loyal commandant; Baba Qaqshal died of cancer. The rebels' real hope of success grew faint when Shahbaz Khan crushed their most powerful ally Masum Khan Farankhudi near Ajodhya (January, 1581), and it died out altogether when Akbar's troops entered Kabul (3rd August) and forced Mirza Hakim to flee to the hills.

VII. Campaign of 1582

On 6th April, 1582, Akbar sent off Khan-i-Azam as governor of Bengal.[1] Orders were also sent to the royal armies in Bihar and Oudh to co-operate with him. Meantime, the Bengal rebels had pushed into Bihar and taken Hajipur and several other parganahs from the agents of Khan-i-Azam, then absent on a visit to Court. Bahadur Kuruh, at the head of a band of Qutlu's Afghans, appeared near Tāndā and was joined by the local rebels. Sādiq Khan bravely

[1] Kh. Azam in Bengal.—*Ak.* iii. 567, 590-593.

defended Patna fort, and even marched out in force to Hajipur, where he fought the rebels (led by Jabbari, Khabita and Tarkhan Diwana) for forty days. An Afghan night attack was defeated on 2-3 April, and next morning Sadiq crossed over to the east bank of the Gandak and defeated the enemy after an obstinate battle,— 2000 imperialists being here opposed to 5000 of the enemy. Khabita was slain. Tarkhan Diwana's son, Nur Muhammad, had made a dash from Bengal, by way of Tirhut, to the Saran district, but at the approach of the imperialists he decamped and was caught and beheaded, while another rebel leader Khwajah Abdul Ghafur in trying to retreat was cut off by a jungle tribe (probably the Santals).

THE MILITARY GEOGRAPHY OF MEDIAEVAL BENGAL

In order to follow clearly the strategy of the Mughal campaigns in Bengal, it is necessary to bear in mind that in early times rivers presented a greater barrier to man than mountains; especially the mighty Ganges and Brahmaputra in all the rage of the flood season defied all attempts at crossing them. Not so the low jungly hills of the Santal Parganahs or Chota Nagpur. Thus, while the two forts of Teliagarhi and Sakrigali rendered the route to Bengal along the south bank of the Ganges impassable except to the lord of a mighty fleet armed with naval guns, this position has been again and again turned successfully by a body of picked hardy cavalry making a detour through the hills south of it and striking the Ganges once more beyond Birbhum.

We must also remember that the south and west of the Midnapur district was covered by a wild jungle and formed a *terra incognita* even in the days of Rennell's survey (1773). This jungle was pierced by a single narrow military foot-path running from Burdwan to Katak, fringed on the west with jungles and savage tribes and yielding no food for man or horse. This route corresponded to the track of the Bengal pilgrims to Jagannath Puri so well-known before the age of steam locomotion.

The Tista river which in that age used to flow into the Ganges (*i.e.*, the Padma) through the Pabna district, and the mightier Brahmaputra long kept East Bengal outside the range of effective Mughal occupation and as the home of unsubdued Afghans and independent local Rajahs. This was specially the case with its southern portion. Mughal rule did not yet touch the following areas: the whole of East Bengal; the entire coastal region south of an east-west line drawn through Hughli; the Chota Nagpur jungles; the south-

eastern part of the Pabna district which was intersected by a labyrinth of channels formed by the lower Karatoya and the then mighty Atrai river and the boundless lagoon called the *Chalan Bil;* the north Rangpur and Jalpaiguri districts.

The easiest and most frequented route from Bengal to upper India was by land from the Dinajpur or Malda side, along the north bank of the Ganges, across the easy Kosi and Gandak to Chapra, Tirhut, and even Jaunpur. The very name of the district Darbanga (gate of Bengal) is significant of this fact in our provincial geography, and Tirhut was long in the possession of the rulers of Bengal, while South Bihar was during the same period held by quite another power. Thus the cities of Patna and Hajipur, facing each other across the Ganges, often owned two different sovereigns.

During the Mughal campaigns in Bengal before Man Singh's time (*circa* 1590), their official capital and military base was Tāndā, about 15 miles south-east of Malda town. From this point it was easy to control the centre north and east of the province through Bogra-Dinajpur (then called the Ghoraghat district), and the south through Burdwan up to Sātgānw (Hughli). South-west of Sātgānw lay the Arambagh sub-division (included in what was then called the Mandāran *sarkar,* corresponding to onr Bankura-Bishnupur), which formed the gateway to Midnapur and Orissa. But the northern sub-division of the present Midnapur district, namely Ghatal, belonged to the subah of Bengal, and its southern portion from the city of Midnapur downwards formed part of the subah of Orissa, being included in the Jaleshwar district (*sarkar*). No district in that age bore the name of Midnapur.

Behind the impenetrable shield of the Brahmaputra, Isa Khan had built up a great power by practising unfailing tact, suppleness of diplomacy, and purchase of the Mughal viceroy's forbearance with friendly offers and costly presents as long as possible. It was only in 1602 that the spirited Man Singh, with a well-equipped flotilla at his command, crushed the independence of this deceitful rebel-leader's son and successor, by attacking his river home.

VIII. The third conquest of Bengal, 1583

During 1582, before Khan-i-Azam's arrival, the local officers had broken the back of the rebellion in Bihar, and now during the closing months of that year strenuous preparations were made for the reconquest of Bengal.[1] The Mughal fief-holders of Allahabad

[1] Bengal campaigns in 1583.—*Ak.* iii. 600-602, 619-625 (Shahbaz Kh. fights).

Oudh and Bihar assembled near Hajipur, forming a vast army. Khan-i-Azam advanced *via* Mungir and Kohlgānw to the Kātigāng (a navigation canal near Rajmahal). The rebels came up, on 27th March, 1583 to face him under Masum Kabuli who had made pacts with Qutlu of Orissa and South Bengal and the Qaqshals of North Bengal (Ghoraghat). Khan-i-Azam had already recovered Teliagarhi on 20th March. But the imperialists were overawed by the vast numbers of the enemy, and frantically appealed to Akbar for fresh aids. "For nearly a month the two armies lay facing each other and discharging guns and muskets only." On 24th April an Afghan flotilla-leader who had come up from Faridpur was killed by a cannon-ball, and soon afterwards the sword-arm of the rebels was broken when Kālāpāhār "who was singular for his skill in river-fighting" fell in battle. Dissension broke out between Masum and the Qaqshal clan, and many of the rebel leaders were induced by imperial diplomacy to desert to Khan-i-Azam. The Afghan army melted away. Masum tried to wreak vengeance on the deserting Qaqshal clan by ravaging their seat, the town of Ghoraghat, and attacking their entrenched position near it, but 4000 imperial horse, detached by Khan-i-Azam, rapidly arrived on the spot and raised the siege.

Khan-i-Azam detested the climate of Bengal, and at his constant pressing Akbar on 18th May, 1583 ordered his transfer to Hajipur where his fiefs lay, and the appointment of Shahbaz Khan then in Patna as his successor in Bengal. Azam at once left for Bihar without waiting for his relief to arrive. Bengal was then left in charge of a subordinate officer, Wazir Khan, for nearly five months. Qutlu seized this opportunity and broke off his delusive peace parleys. Therefore, the imperialists marched from Sherpur (south of Bogra town) to Burdwan, crossed the Damodar river to its south bank, and stood in battle array facing Qutlu's entrenchments (end of June). Here the Afghan commander Bahadur Kuruh was defeated *c.* 15th July, but the imperialists had not the spirit to follow up their victory by a pursuit into Orissa.

From Tāndā two detachments had been sent out, one northwards to Ghoraghat to protect that home of the now loyal Qaqshals and keep out rebel bands coming once again from the Kuch Bihar side or the Mymensingh district, and another southwards to Burdwan and beyond to Sātgānw, to watch the Orissa frontier where the Pathan power had revived under Qutlu Lohani. Early in October 1583, the northern army under Tarsun Khan, then occupying Tajpur, was threatened by Masum Kabuli who had advanced from his refuge in Isa Khan's country, and raided up to within 14 miles of Tāndā

(then defended by a depleted garrison.) Tarsun was beleaguered at Tajpur, but Shahbaz Khan now at last hurried up from Patna and drove Masum away (end of October). The new viceroy recalled to his side a part of the Orissa detachment. Admiral Shah Bardi had died and 3000 of his artillery-men (including Portuguese mercenaries) entered Shahbaz's service. Shahbaz advanced from Tāndā; a rebel force under Baba Bhakari which was threatening Mahi Santosh (south Dinajpur) dispersed at his approach. Even Masum Kabuli, who had been holding delusive parleys with him from the east bank of the Jamuna fled away (*c.* 15th November). The fugitives were pursued, overtaken and defeated with the loss of their elephants and other property. The imperialists reached Ghoraghat; Masum took refuge in Bhati and Jabbari in Kuch Bihar, and Shahbaz plundered their homes in Sherpur making prisoners of their families and 150 noted men among the Pathans. Some more desultory fighting followed.

IX. Campaign of 1584

Shahbaz Khan, followed up his success by entering Isa Khan's country of Vikrampur,[1] though the violence of the rainy season was not yet over. He wished to force him to keep his promise of surrendering Masum Kabuli whom he was harbouring. Advancing by way of Khizrpur (one mile north of Narayanganj), the Mughal viceroy took possession of Sonārgānw and plundered Kātrābhu, the home of Isa Khan, "a populous city", and then marching up the Lakhia river to its point of junction with the Brahmaputra, took Egārasindur, and established a fortified base at Tok, opposite to Egārasindur and on the western bank of the Brahmaputra. Isa Khan who had come back from Kuch Bihar, and Masum Kabuli faced him, and there were daily skirmishes on land and water. A weak detachment sent by Shahbaz under Tarsun Khan to make a demonstration against Bajitpur was surprised by the enemy and cut off; Tarsun was captured wounded and beheaded.

For seven months Shahbaz Khan lay at Tok, in the bend formed by the Lakhia, the Brahmaputra and the Banār rivers. He sent to Isa Khan demanding either the surrender or the expulsion of Masum Kabuli, but the ruler of Bhati only gained time by delusive promises. Shahbaz Khan's inordinate pride alienated all people, his officers too

[1] *Ak.* iii. 645-651, 658-660, 696, (Isa Kh. and East Bengal war.) Isa Kh's origin, 647.

practised violence; hence the rebellion flamed up again. Then came the floods. One dark night the Afghans cut the embankment of the Brahmaputra in 15 places, so that Shahbaz's camp and batteries were submerged. After a stubborn fight he just managed to beat this attack off. Isa Khan next made a prisoner of Sayyid Husain the imperial thanahdar of Dacca, and proposed terms through him. Shahbaz then fell back to Bhawal, halfway on the road to Dacca. The negotiations were again broken off and a battle took place on 30th September, 1584, in which Shahbaz on being deserted by his discontented and envious subordinates was forced to leave Bhawal and retreat towards Tāndā, abandoning all his accumulations and many of his men as prisoners.

After this disastrous end of the first Bhati campaign of the Mughals, Isa Khan prudently stayed at home, while Masum advanced to Sherpur (Bogra) and other Afghans raided up to Malda city.

The southern division of the Bengal army under Wazir Khan, had meanwhile continued facing Qutlu near Burdwan. When that Pathan chief at last retreated, the Mughals pursued him up to Tukaroi; but Qutlu made his submission by sending a present of 60 elephants with his nephew. These reached Akbar on 11th June, 1584. Wazir Khan was now ordered back to Tāndā, and Sādiq Khan to Patna. (*Ak.* iii. 653.)

CAMPAIGN OF 1585

Akbar, on learning of the failure of Shahbaz Khan in East Bengal, sent strong bailiffs to urge his Bengal and Bihar officers to act in close concert and put Isa Khan down. Shahbaz was turned out of his fief in Bihar and conducted to Bengal, arriving at Tāndā on 28th December, 1584. Masum was easily driven away and the country up to Sherpur recovered (end of January, 1585), that rebel leader being compelled to take refuge in Fathabad parganah. Another great rebel Dastam Qaqshal was chased back to Shahzadpur in the Pabna district. (*Ak.* iii. 672-674.)

At the beginning of March 1585, the irreconcilable Bengal officers were by order of Akbar divided into two armies,—Wazir Khan and Sadiq Khan being sent off against Masum Kabuli, while Shahbaz Khan remained in North Bengal for keeping the local evil-doers down. On the last day of that month, Masum was defeated in a naval battle and put to flight, his two forts at Trimohani—the junction of the Ganges the Jamuna and the Saraswati (*i.e.*, Tribeni near Hughli) (*AK.* iii. 693) being taken. Tahir Ilanchaq, the dis-

turber of Tajpur (west Dinajpur), scored a success over the imperialists, and Tarkhan Diwana raided up to Tāndā and tried to fire its suburbs, but was driven away, (dying later in Morang). But Yusuf bin Mati Afghan cut off young Habib Ali, the son of the brave Muhib Ali Rohtasi, in a small encounter.

In fact the inordinate pride and mutual jealousies of the imperial commanders in the eastern provinces prevented cordial union among them in suppressing the rebellion. Akbar's repeated admonitions had no effect. So, at last, he clearly separated the two charges ; Sadiq Khan got Bengal and Shahbaz was given Bihar. The latter at once left Bengal in anger, and so also did S'aid Khan and other Bihar generals. This depletion of the imperial strength in Bengal encouraged Isa Khan to put off his actual submission, though he prudently sent to Akbar the elephants and guns that had fallen into his hands during the late disaster to Shahbaz Khan. The officers of the extinct house of Karrāni again advanced from their base in Orissa, moving bands of Afghans out of work gathered round them, and they began to plunder the Burdwan district. An imperial force under Sadiq, Wazir Khan and Muhib Ali advanced to the bank of the Ajay, forded it and defeated the enemy on 10th June, 1585, slaying 1300 of them, mostly in the pursuit. Dastam Qaqshal had reappeared and laid siege to Ghoraghat, but was defeated and driven away. (*Ak.* iii. 675, 693-698.)

X. Shahbaz Khan pacifies Bengal : 1586-87

Clearly the campaign of 1585, though conducted by a new set of officers, had achieved no better result than before. Therefore, under fresh pressure from Akbar, Shahbaz Khan returned to Bengal[1] on 30th January, 1586, and this time by following a policy of conciliation and liberal gifts he won over most of the Afghans. Isa Khan, when threatened by a detachment from Shahbaz's army, had no longer the heart to fight, and made peace by restoring the territory which Sadiq Khan had surrendered to him in the previous peace, and sending rare presents and using soft language. Masum Kabuli sent his son to Akbar's court and was himself directed to go to Hijaz on pilgrimage for a time. Many of Qutlu's followers abandoned that chief and he was left to enjoy Orissa in peace, as Shahbaz was not prepared for a long war yet. The official history

[1] Shahbaz Kh. in Bengal (1586);—*Ak.* iii. 721-722, Said Kh. posted to Bengal and Mān S. to Bihar, 801.

of Akbar records that "the conquests now extended up to the port of Ṣātgānw"—and no doubt the *de jure* authority of the imperial Government over all Bengal was acknowledged. Even the Burmese ruler of Arracan sent many presents.

Wazir Khan died of diarrhoea on 1st August, 1587, and S'aid Khan was (on the 26th of that month) ordered by the Emperor to go from Bihar and take charge of the Bengal subah. The province of Bihar was put in charge of Kumar Man Singh, and he was given his *congee* for his new province on 17th December, his jagirs in the Panjab being replaced by others in South Bihar, especially the Rohtas region. Payinda Khan Mughal, from whom these Bihar fiefs were now taken away, was given an equivalent in Ghoraghat.

With the year 1587, a new chapter opened in the internal history of Bengal. By a royal decree of 24th November, 1586, Akbar ordered for each province of his empire the same uniform cadre of official heads, namely a governor (called *sipah-salar*), a deputy governor (to hold charge during his chief's absence at court), a revenue minister (*diwan*), and an inspector-general of forces (*bakhshi*), besides a civil judge (Sadr), a criminal judge (*qazi*) and a police prefect (*kotwal*). The first officers in Bengal were Wazir Khan and Muhib Ali (governors), Karamullah (*diwān*), and Shāhbāz (*bakhshi*), and in Bihar, S'aid Khan and Md. Yusuf Khan, Rai Patradas and Abdur Razzāq M'amuri respectively. (*Ak.* iii. 779.)

CHAPTER XI

RAJAH MAN SINGH KACHHWA VICEROY

I. Man Singh governor of Bihar

The work done by Man Singh in Bihar is admirably summed up by Akbar's official historian in one short but fully eloquent sentence : "The Rajah united ability with courage and genius with strenuous action; he administered the province excellently; the refractory became obedient." (*Akbarnamah,* iii, 872). His hand first fell upon Puran Mal the Rajput Rajah of Gidhaur, who had declared independence during the recent eclipse of Government in the province and whose lands lay across the eastward route from Patna. Man Singh marched upon Gidhaur, and easily captured its mud-fort with all the Rajah's treasure. Puran Mal then submitted and gained his pardon by offering a tribute of many noted elephants and valuable articles and betrothing his daughter to his conqueror's brother Chandra-bhān Kachhwa. Sangrām Singh, the Rajah of Khargpur (near Mungir), was next cowed into making submission and paying tribute.

From this point, Man Singh returned to Patna and marched south against Anant Chero of the Gaya district, from whom much plunder was taken. During the viceroy's absence his eldest son Jagat Singh ably guarded Patna. Taking advantage of Man Singh's pre-occupation in the southern districts, two Muslim rebel leaders from Bengal made raids into Purnia and Darbhanga and penetrated to fourteen miles of Hajipur. Young Jagat Singh boldly advanced at the head of the local militia against the invaders, who fled away abandoning their collected booty to the imperialists. Man Singh sent the most valuable portion of the spoils of these wars and 54 elephants to the Emperor, who received them at Lahore on 3rd April, 1590. (*Ak.* iii. 872.)

II. Man Singh's first conquest of Orissa

After thus "ably settling the province of Bihar and reducing the refractory to obedience," Man Singh in April 1590 set out for the conquest of Orissa, being reinforced by the Bengal artillery on the way. By the route of Bhagalpur and Burdwan, he reached Jaha-

nabad (now named Arambagh in the west of the Hughli district) on the then frontier of Orissa, that is the modern Midnapur district, and encamped there in view of the early rains of Bengal. Qutlu Khan Lohani, the Afghan ruler of North Orissa, sent up a large force under Bahadur Kuruh to the fort of Raipur, some fifty miles west of the imperial camp.

The leader of the Mughal advanced division, "the inexperienced youth" Jagat Singh, was entirely deluded by the Afghans and resigned himself to drink and neglect of business, so that on 21st May, near sunset, he was suddenly surprised by the enemy in overwhelming force; the careless and disordered imperialists after a little fight fled away; Bikā Rathor, Mahesh Das and Nāru Chāran bravely sacrificed their lives, but could not stem the rout. Jagat Singh was wounded but saved from capture by the loyal Rajah Vir Hāmbir taking him to his fort of Vishnupur (in the Bankura district), and even a rumour arose that the Kachhwa prince was dead.

But after ten days Qutlu died, his young son Nāsir was placed on his throne by his wazir Khwājah 'Isā, who wisely made terms with the Mughals, promising to read the khutba and stamp coins in Akbar's name and live as his faithful vassal, and also to cede the temple of Jagannath (at Puri) and its surrounding district to the Emperor. On 15th August, the Afghan boy-king made his bow before Man Singh, and presented his tribute of 150 elephants and many choice articles. After this success Man Singh returned to Bihar. (*Ak.* iii. 879-880.)

The Afghans are a faithless passionate race; after the death of 'Isā Khwājah, the wise regent of their boy-king, there was none who could keep their nobles in check; they broke the treaty, seized the temple of Jagannath from its Mughal custodian, and attacked Rajah Vir Hāmbir for his loyalty to the Delhi throne. Man Singh was therefore called upon to proceed against them again. Leaving Bihar on 3rd November, 1591, he marched in two divisions by land and down the Ganges and was joined by the local landholders and the Bengal troops under their viceroy S'aid Khan. They conquered the country up to one day's march of Jaleshwar. The Afghans met the threat by advancing to their northern frontier. After months spent in talk and daily skirmishes a severe battle was fought with the entire Afghan army which had crossed the river (Suvarna-rekhā)[1]

[1] Man Singh's Orissa campaign of 1592,—*Ak.* iii. 933-937, 940-941. The place where the first Mughal victory took place is named in the Persian text variously as *Benāpur* and *Malnāpur*. It was only one day's march, say 12 miles, north of Jalesh-

"at the forest of Benāpur surrounded by a stream," (10th April, 1592). There was a lack of real co-ordination between the Bengal contingent and Man Singh's troops, and at first the enemy's charges threatened to rout the imperialists. But supports were pushed up from the rear in good time, and the Mughal artillery and archers did havoc among the Afghans and the elephants on whom they chiefly relied. At last the enemy broke and fled leaving 300 dead on the field, including one divisional commander Khwajah Wais, while another commander Sultan Sur was taken captive. Man Singh's own clansmen, especially his sons Jagat and Durjan, took a conspicuous part in charging the enemy and turning the dubious tide of the battle.

Next day the victorious general arrived in pursuit at Jaleshwar, where he had the *khutba* read and coins struck in Akbar's name. The Afghans retreated and he continued to advance further south into Orissa, "digging up the roots of disaffection" and accepting the submission of the local zamindars. S'aid Khan, in a mean spirit of jealousy, gave up his partnership in the campaign and returned to Bengal, in spite of Man Singh's earnest attempts at conciliation.

At Bhadrak the Kachhwa Rajah learnt of the Afghan concentration near the fort of Sarang-garh (Cuttack district). Leaving a garrison in Bhadrak, he marched to Cuttack which fell to him without a blow. This success led to further successes: the fort of Aul was peacefully surrendered; the Tilā Rajah joined near Kālkālghāti, but the greatest of the Orissa rulers, the Rajah of Khurda, still held out at Sarang-garh. From Cuttack Man Singh made a pilgrimage to the famous shrine of Jagannath at Puri, and thereafter took post near Pipli (midway between Cuttack and Puri), raiding the Khurda territory. At last the Khurda Rajah, Ram Chandra Dev submitted and sent his son Birbar with presents to the Mughal viceroy. Man Singh next moved to the neighbourhood of Sarang-garh. Meantime the dispersed Afghans rose in his rear and wrested the town of Jaleshwar from his lieutenant Babui Mankali, but a Mughal detachment from Cuttack recovered the post. On 30th May (or a month later) the fort of Sarang-garh capitulated to Man Singh.

But the Khurda Rajah continued to evade waiting on Man Singh in person. An expedition was therefore sent into his territory under Jagat Singh and other officers. Rajah Ram Chandra Dev

war town, and at a loop of the Suvarnarekhā river or some feeder of it. The more famous *Benāpur* is 40 miles north of Jaleshwar (unlikely), and therefore the battle site was some obscure village Benāpur, 10 or 12 miles from Jaleshwar.

shut himself up in Khurda, but many of his other forts and cities[1] rapidly fell to Mughal arms (1592).

Akbar disapproved of this rigour to an ancient dynasty that had acknowledged his suzerainty. Man Singh now received a censure from his master and recalled his troops from Khurda territory. Then, at last, the Khurda Rajah personally waited on Man Singh (31st January, 1593) and gave him a daughter in marriage. The conquest of Orissa was thus completed.[2]

But the conquest of Orissa did not bring peace to the Mughals in the eastern provinces; it only shifted the disease to another part of the body politic. Man Singh had seen too much of the Pathans both in Afghanistan and Orissa to trust them implicitly. He removed their surviving chiefs Sulaimān and Usmān (the nephews of Qutlu Khan) and three others from the soil of Orissa altogether and assigned them fiefs in the Faridpur (Khalifatabad) district of East Bengal. But before they could arrive there, he realised that it was unwise to plant them so close to the border of Orissa where they had many adherents and a long local connection, and so he wrote cancelling their new grants and recalling them to his camp. At this they broke out in open rebellion and went plundering up to Sātgānw, and on being repulsed there turned to Bhushnā (in the Jessore district). Here they killed their host Chand Rai (the son of the local zamindar Kedar Rai) who had tried to seize them (11th February, 1593). They captured and robbed Bhushnā fort and made off to join Isa Khan Masnad-i-ala, the greatest of the Bengal zamindars, who ruled over the Dacca district. Thus the Afghan royal power, subverted in West Bengal and Orissa, was established anew in East Bengal, beyond the Brahmaputra river.

At this time Man Singh took the fort of Bhānpur (text reads Mānpur), situated between Orissa and Telingana and gave it to Ram Chandra Dev. Then he returned to Rohtas (in South Bihar) and stayed there till a summons from his master took him to Lahore. On 23 February 1594, he presented at court three sons of Qutlu Khan and two great nobles of Orissa namely Kāshi Parijā and Purushottam. (*Ak.* iii. 968-969, 997.)

[1] *Akbarnamah,* iii. 967, names these conquests thus: Sahajpal (? Sākhigopal.) Kharagarh. Kalupara (on the west shore of the Chilka lake), Kahnan (? Kannaus). Longarh and Bhunmal.

[2] *Ak.* iii. 941, 967; Sharif Sarmadi, the Bakhshi of Bengal, wrote a long Persian account of Mān Singh's conquest of Jagannath-Puri, the only manuscript of which is preserved in the British Museum,— ms. No. *Mus. Or.* 27, 247.

III. MAN SINGH AS VICEROY OF BENGAL — HIS CAMPAIGNS IN EAST BENGAL

On 17th March of the same year, Prince Salim was appointed to a nominal command of ten thousand horse, with Man Singh as his guardian. Five thousand of the Prince's troops, including Jagat Singh, Durjan Singh and Sakat Singh received jagirs in Bengal, while Himmat Singh, Bhau Singh, Rajah Ram Chandra Dev (of Khurda) as well as many Bengal Pathan chiefs (of the Lohani and Sur clans) were granted fiefs in Orissa. "Rajah Man Singh, whose ability and loyalty were conspicuous, was made Ataliq (guardian) and his maintenance-jagir was allotted to him in Bengal, of which province he was now made viceroy,—in the place of S'aid Khan, transferred to the subahdari of Bihar." On 4th May, 1594, Akbar sent Man Singh off to his new province with many wise counsels as to the administrative policy to be followed there. (*Ak.* iii. 998, 1001.)

On arriving at Tāndā the ancient capital of Muslim Bengal, Man Singh sent off detachments to subdue the various districts. One of these, led by his son Himmat Singh conquered Bhushnā fort (2nd April 1595). (*Ibid.* 1023.)

On 7th November of this year, Man Singh laid the foundations of a new capital of Bengal at Rajmahal, as a place "which could to some extent be safe from attack by boats" and named it, after his master, Akbar-nagar. Soon "a choice city sprang up here," at a much healthier site than Gaur or Dacca and nearer to Bihar. (*Ibid.* 1042.)

From this rising capital, Man Singh set out on 7th December, 1595 to conquer Bhāti or the East Bengal delta from Isa Khan. The Afghans retreated before him to beyond the Brahmaputra and Man Singh encamped at Sherpur Murcha (in the Bogra distrist) for the coming monsoons, and there built a mud-fort which he named Salimnagar. Much of Isā Khan's territory fell into Mughal hands. In far-off Orissa, his son Durjan Singh Kachhwa captured the fort of Kakruya, the zamindar of which had sought to make an alliance with the Sultan of Golkonda. This young general also recovered after much fighting the fort of Bhushnā (on 20th June, 1596), which had been wrested from its negligent imperial commandant by Khwajah Sulaimān Lohani and Kedar Rai. A gun burst inside the fort during the siege, killing Sulaimān and wounding Kedār Rāi, who fled away to 'Isā Khan. (*Ibid.* 1043, 1059.)

In the rainy season of 1596 (July-September) while Man Singh was cantoning at Ghoraghat (in North Bengal), he fell so ill that

the physicians began to despair of his life. This tempted Isa Khan, Masum Khan Kabuli and other half-suppressed rebels to rise again and advance to within 24 miles of the viceroy's camp in their war-boats, to which arm the imperialists had no adequate reply. But the river level having fallen the rebel flotilla was forced to hurry back downstream and thus escape the fate of being stranded in the shallows and captured by the Mughal horse and artillery. Man Singh immediately on his recovery, sent a select force under Himmat Singh, whose approach drove the rebels into the jungly interior of Mymensingh (Egāra-sindur), and he plundered their territory freely. (*Ak.* iii. 1063.)

Lakshmi Narayan, the Rajah of the friendly kingdom of Kuch Bihar, on being attacked by his cousin Raghudev in alliance with Isa Khan, begged for Akbar's protection. Man Singh hastened to his aid from Salimnagar to Govindapur, where Lakshmi Narayan came and welcomed him on 23rd December, 1596 and give him his sister in marriage. The two enemies of the Kuch Rajah having taken flight on hearing of Man Singh's prompt advance, he sent his deliverer back with honours and gifts. Thus a new vassal State was created on the north-eastern frontier of Bengal. But very soon Man Singh lost two great lieutenants: his son Himmat Singh "distinguished for courage and power of management," died of cholera in Bengal (16th March, 1597), while his eldest son was sent off on an expedition to Nagarkot in the far off north Panjab hills (April 1597 to June 1598).

The pretender Raghudev having collected a force again, seized some portions of the Kuch Bihar territory and drove the old Lakshmi Narayan into a fort for shelter. A detachment sent by Man Singh defeated Raghudev (on 3rd May, 1597), but as soon as these Mughal troops returned to Bengal, Isa Khan set out to help Raghudev. Man Singh countered this move by detaching a force by land and river, under his son Durjan Singh, to attack Katrabhu, the very seat of Isa Khan. A discontented kinsman of Isa Khan offered to guide the imperialists. On 5th September, 1597, twelve miles from Vikrampur (Dacca), the flotilla of Isa Khan and Masum Khan surrounded the Mughal detachment in overwhelming force, slew Durjan Singh and many of his troops and took some prisoners. Isa Khan, however, thought it wiser to make peace; he set the prisoners free, gave up his attack on Lakshmi Narayan and offered submission to the Emperor. (*Ibid.* iii. 1067, 1081-1082, 1093.)

IV. Man Singh absent in Ajmer — troubles renewed in Bengal

No doubt saddened by the loss of two such brilliant sons and shaken by the Bengal climate, Man Singh begged permission to live in Ajmer (close to his long unvisited home) and govern Bengal by deputy, (1598). Isa Khan died in September 1599, and one standing menace to the peace of the province was removed. Man Singh's eldest son, Jagat Singh, was ordered by the emperor to go to Bengal and officiate for his father; but the young man died of heavy drinking near Agra on 6th October; grief for him prostrated Mān Singh. Mahā Singh (the son of Jagat Singh) though a lad in his teens, was sent to Bengal to lead the Kachhwa contingent there and serve as deputy viceroy.

Seizing this long absence of the veteran viceroy and despising his boy substitute, Usman, Sajawal and other turbulent Pathans who had made a deceptive submission, rose in revolt. On 29th April, 1600, they defeated an inferior imperial force led by Maha Singh and his guardian, Pratap Singh Kachhwa (a younger son of Rajah Man). The Afghans recovered north Orissa.

Dangers thickened round the Mughal throne; the Bengal rebels, finding the field vacant, inflicted defeats on several small imperial detachments and even captured the Inspector-general of the provincial army, Abdur Razzāq Ma'muri. (*Ak.* iii, 1133, 1140-1141, 1151, 1174.)

V. Man Singh returns to Bengal; his vigorous measures

These reverses forced the hand of Man Singh. He hastened east from Allahabad, halted for some weeks at Rohtas to make preparations, and then pushed on to face the rebels in East Bengal. Near Sherpur Atia in a single field he routed them with heavy loss (12th February, 1601), pursued them for eight miles and rescued his captive *Bakhshi* from threatened death at their hands. (*Ibid.* iii. 1174, 1180.)

Next year, Man Singh marched to the Dacca district and induced Kedar Rai, the zamindar of Sripur (South Dacca) to promise loyalty to Akbar. Then, hearing that Jalāl Khan of Baz-Ghogra was looting Malda and Akra, the Rajah sent orders to his grandson Maha Singh to march from Ghoraghat against this new rebel. The young Kachhwa prince overtook the enemy (500 horse and 5,000 foot) as they lay sheltered behind the Kalindri river (northwest of Malda city). "Maha Singh impetuously forded the river on horse back and clambered up the steep opposite bank, though losing about a

hundred men by drowning, and put the rebels to the rout like the wind." The victor next proceeded to the Purnia district, to put down Qāzi Mumin, a local rebel, who had made a fort on an island protected by a dense jungle. This leader was killed. (*Ibid.* iii. 1213.)

Next Usman, the nephew and successor of Qutlu Khan, crossed the Brahmaputra and drove back Bāz Bahādur Qalmāq, the Mughal thanahdar of Mymensingh, to Bhawal. Man Singh hurried up from Dacca to Bhawal in one day and night and attacked Usman on the bank of the Banār river. Many Pathans were slain and much booty in the form of boats and artillery obtained by the victorious Rajah. After re-establishing this outpost, Man Singh returned to Dacca (about February 1602) and sent a detachment across the Ichhāmati against Musā Khan (son of the dead Isa Khan) and Kedar Rai, the rulers of Vikrampur and Sripur, respectively, who had leagued in rebellion with Dāud, the son of Qutlu Khan's late wazir, and other zamindars and were blocking the river crossings. This obstacle held up the detachment for many days, on hearing of which Man Singh himself came up from Dacca to Shāhpur, and immediately on his arrival drove his elephant into the Ichhāmati river. Many of his brave retainers followed him by swimming their horses. The river was crossed and the enemy routed and pursued up to nightfall, when Man Singh reached two small places between Narayanganj and Surajadi.

Sher Ghazi, a powerful local zamindar, now waited on Man Singh, who next proceeded to Sripur and Vikrampur, but Dāud and other Pathans having retreated to Sonārgānw, he returned to his base at Dacca. (*Ak.* iii. 1214-1215.)

A fleet of the Arracan pirates (called *Maghs* or Burmese) invaded the Dacca waters and invested the fort at Tri-mohani (junction of two rivers). The imperial captain there, Sultan Quli Qalmāq, had a fracas with the Kashmiri garrison of this fort and was wounded and fled away at night. The enemy thus emboldened, advanced plundering many Mughal posts on the way. A force sent by Man Singh under Ibrāhim Beg Atka, Raghudas, Askarn, Dalpat Rao and other captains, chastised the invaders after a stiff fight, killing many of them. The Arracanese then withdrew from the dry land to their boats and opened a hot fire with their muskets and cannon, but the Mughals sank some of their gun-boats (*ghurābs*) about August, 1603.

Kedar Rai now joined the Maghs with his own powerful fleet and attacked the Mughal outpost of Srinagar, to which Man Singh had to send relief with artillery. Near Vikrampur a great battle was fought, in which Kedar Rai was wounded and captured. When

brought before Man Singh his life ebbed out. Many Portuguese pirates and Bengali sailors in his service were killed. With the death of this active and turbulent zamindar the flames of disturbance in deltaic Bengal were quenched. After this Man Singh started from his base at Bhawal against the Magh Rajah who fled away to his own country. Back at Bhawal once again, Man Singh turned his military preparations against Usman, who too fled away. The Bengal viceroy then returned to Dacca, and later went into cantonments at Nāzirpur for spending the rainy season (July-September) of 1604. (*Ak.* iii. 1231, 1235-1236, 1240.)

At the beginning of next year (1605), Akbar felt his own end approaching and summoned his most trusted officers to his side. Man Singh arrived at Agra shortly after 11th March, and continued to stay by the Emperor till his death, on the 15th October following. (*Ak.* iii. 1256-1261.)

Jahangir, a fortnight after his accession sent Man Singh off to Bengal as subahdar of that province once more (*c.* 10th November, 1605). But the Kachhwa Rajah's third viceroyalty of Bengal was short and uneventful. Jahangir was disconsolate; his home was dark, because she who was coveted as the Light of his Harem—and was destined afterwards to blaze forth as the Light of the World (Nur-i-Jahan) was then illuminating the humble tent of her lawful husband Sher-afkan Istajlu, a petty Turkish jagirdar of Burdwan. The royal sorrow found a sympathetic listener in his foster-brother Qutbuddin Khan Koka, who was appointed on 2nd September, 1606 governor of Bengal, with whispered instructions as to the means of procuring the healing balm for the afflicted royal heart. The service required of the new subahdar being too delicate for a man of honour, Man Singh was recalled from Bengal and transferred to his old charge of Bihar. Here he took up his residence in the salubrious hill-fort of Rohtas, overlooking the Sone river, which he and his clansmen greatly liked. This viceroyalty, too, soon ended, and he was recalled to court, arriving at Agra in March 1608. (*Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri,* tr. Rogers, i. 15, 78, 137-138.)

CHAPTER XII

TRANSFORMATION OF BENGAL UNDER MUGHAL RULE

1. The Chief Factors.

It was only in the reign of Jahāngir that Mughal administration really started in Bengal, because Akbar's time and the first eight years after Jahāngir's accession were the age of conquering generals, when the province was not yet ready to accept and work a settled civil government. It was only Islām Khan's success in crushing out—and not, as under his predecessors, merely defeating in skirmishes—the old heads of local rebellion, that made regular peaceful Mughal rule in this province possible. Though Bengal had been included among the eleven subahs to which Akbar in November 1586 sent out orders for setting up his new type of uniform provincial administration, the order took a quarter of a century to be actually enforced. Hence the beginning of the reign of Jahāngir is a convenient place where we can pause in the narration of events and take a general survey of the Mughal age in Bengal and its effect upon the province. The subject has been briefly touched in Chapter X section I; it will now be studied in detail.

The period of Mughal imperial rule over Bengal witnessed the working of certain new forces which have completely transformed Bengali life and thought and whose influence is still operating in the province. In one word, during the first century of Mughal rule (1575-1675 A.D.), the outer world came to Bengal and Bengal went out of herself to the outer world, and the economic, social and cultural changes that grew out of this mingling of peoples mark a most important and distinct stage in the evolution of modern Bengal. Indeed, there has been nothing in our province's past history at all comparable to it except the modernisation which we owe to the British influence.

True, the Mughal Emperors did not deliberately introduce these forces, but the political change which accompanied their conquest and the administration which they imposed on the conquered land made the triumph of the new forces possible and easy. These two forces were the growth of a vast sea-borne trade and the organisation of the Bengal Vaishnavs into a sect.

II. European trade and its effect

The first of these forces originated many thousand miles away. The Wars of Religion in Europe ended with the Peace of Westphalia (1648) and the flight of Charles II, after Worcester (1651). And the energy and enterprise of Europe, released from ruinous conflict at home, felt itself free to go out and impinge upon this fabled land of gold. Even while the Wars of Religion were still raging, salt-petre (an essential ingredient of gun-powder) was so much in demand all over Europe that it was keenly sought after and largely exported from its chief source in North Bihar (Lālganj) by the river route through Bengal. Next came a rapid development of Bengal's export trade in silk stuffs, indigo, fine cotton goods and coarse cotton textiles (the last being for Asiatic consumers). The volume of Bengal's trade in the outward direction can be judged from the fact that in the four years 1680-1683 taken together, a single European nation the English, imported into Bengal silver worth £200,000 to pay for their purchases. The Dutch annual investment in Bengal was at least as large in amount as this, because they were firmly set in this province earlier than the English. Now, this English investment, at the then rate of exchange, amounted to 4 lakhs of rupees per annum, when the rupee had twenty times its purchasing power of our own days (taking the last prewar year, 1938). Thus the equivalent of eighty lakhs of rupees was thrown into the Bengali market every year by only one European Company, in the form of silver bullion coined into rupees at the Mughal mints of Rajmahal and Dacca. (In 1681 the total value of the Indian products exported by the English E. I. Co., from Bengal alone, reached £230,000, or 18½ lakhs of rupees, equivalent to over three and two-thirds krors of rupees in the money of our own day).

This huge influx of silver effected a sudden and profound change in Bengal's economy. During early Muslim rule, the products of our fields and looms could be sold for money only to a very small extent, as the sole foreign purchasers were a few Chinese (importing silver), Malayese, Arabs (from the head of the Persian Gulf) and Portuguese voyaging to Bengal once in a year or two; we had besides these, a small amount of coastal trade with our equally poor neighbours Orissa and Teleguland. For internal consumption barter was the practice wherever possible, and prices in terms of money were exceedingly low. This is proved by the universal use of small conch-shells (*cowries*) as the money unit and medium of exchange, except at the top level and for very large transactions. The use of *cowries* as the people's currency lingered in Calcutta itself as late as 1880 and in the villages for 20 years more.

Witness also the incredibly low price of the menu at the dinners given to the Vaishnav saint Chaitanya by his devotees at Puri about the year 1520, as recorded in his biography by Krishnadās Kavirāj, (*Antya*, viii. 38, 51, 85).

All over Orissa and in many parts of Bengal too, the land-rent could be collected only in the form of grain, and the collectors had the greatest difficulty in paying the Government revenue in cash, as the conversion of crops into rupees involved heavy losses.

For many years the only tribute which the Mughal Emperors used to get from Bengal was in the form of elephants and art objects manufactured in the province, but no cash. Only just before Jahāngir's death (1627) that Emperor bound his viceroy in Bengal to send him five lakhs of rupees from the province every year as a personal offering (*khasah*) for himself and the same amount for his queen,—but no surplus revenue was even then paid into the Central Exchequer of Delhi. How long even these ten lakhs were really paid we do not know;[1] certainly not during the costly and chronic warfare with Assam which filled Shah Jahān's reign and one-half of Aurangzib's. In 1682 Shāista Khan began paying 5 lakhs *annually*.

But the growth of European trade by bringing huge quantities of silver into the country and passing the money on to the Bengali peasants and artisans, at last enabled the Mughal viceroy to send tribute in money to his master in Delhi. Thus the surplus revenue from Bengal came to be the mainstay of the Emperor's family and army during the latter years of Aurangzib's reign and all through the first forty years of the 18th century.

Again, by providing Bengal with an universally accepted medium of exchange, the European traders enabled us to buy the products of other provinces and countries to an extent inconceivable in the earlier times, when barter was the chief method of our trade.

1. The only record of such a *cash* payment is under 8 May 1635, when the Emperor received from Azam Kh. the ex-subahdar of Bengal, in addition to elephants &c., (worth seven lakhs of Rs.), five lakhs of rupees in cash—"which had been paid to the subahdar by the zamindars of that province, it being a standing rule that the zamindars should *once* (*ek martaba*) pay that amount as peshkash to whomsoever was appointed subahdar of the province and that the latter should send it to the Emperor along with his own tribute [really, *nazar* or present] before his removal from that office." [Abd. Hamid, i. B. 100.]

Therefore the fiive lakhs of rupees in cash demanded by Jahangir for himself from Bengal was payable by each subahdar only once during his tenure and not every year, though the continuation of the *Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri* (Sy. Ahmad's ed. p. 420) wrongly says *har sal* (annually).

True, in this way money prices and money wages rose sharply in Bengal from the middle of the 17th century, but that did not necessarily mean any increase in the real wages of labour, as every student of economics knows. The upper classes of our society certainly grew richer, and came to possess more articles of luxury than before; and the Government officials and revenue-collecting middlemen made money on a very much larger scale than in Akbar's days.

At the same time the European exporters gave a tremendous impetus to industrial production in Bengal. Here was a vast market for our saltpetre, cotton goods, silk yarn, and indigo; the buyers stood ready with unimaginable cash in hand for almost any quantity that our peasants and artisans could offer. These foreign exporters also organised our industrial production with a view to making it more efficient and economical. By their chain of agents at every mart, by their system of advances (*dadan*) to the workmen, by their setting up of workshops for Indian labourers in their factories[2] (where they could work under European supervision), and by their bringing out from England dyers and "twist-throwers" who taught the indigenous artisans better methods,—they raised Bengal's industrial production to a higher level of quality, besides immensely increasing its quantity.

Bengal's economic isolation was now broken. Closer contact was established with her western neighbour Bihar, from which all the saltpetre and some of the indigo for shipment abroad came down the Ganges to our ports of embarkation.

The new trade began also, but very imperceptibly and slowly, to sap the foundations of our cultural isolation. The European commercial settlements—Calcutta (1690), Chandernagar (1690), Chinsura (about 1650) were destined at the end of the 17th century to be fortified and thus to provide havens of refuge to the oppressed and the affrighted rich in the Mughal dominions, and serve as seed-beds of a new and richer culture. But that was long in coming.

The influence of the Protestant missionaries on Bengali society and literature in the early nineteenth century is well-known, and these teachers are gratefully remembered as the fathers of the Bengali renaissance. But of the work of the Portuguese missionaries

2. Bernier wrote (about 1666)—"The Dutch have sometimes seven or eight hundred natives employed in their silk factory at Kasimbazar, where in like manner the English and other merchants employ a proportionate number.........I have been sometimes amazed at the vast quantity of cotton goods which the Hollanders alone export." (p. 439). Tavernier wrote, "Qasimbazar can furnish 22,000 bales of silk annually," weighing 50 seers each [i. 2.] "The Dutch invest at least £200,000 yearly [in Bengal and the East Coast]"—acc. to Balesore Eng. factors' letter of Dec. 1654.

in Bengal in the 17th century the historian gets only a few tantalising glimpses. From Du Jarric's account of the visit of two Jesuit Fathers to the Court of Raja Pratāpāditya (1599—1600) we learn of the high estimation they had won by their purity of character, but we know nothing definite about their civilizing influence upon Bengali society. Except for enriching the stock of words in the Bengali language, the Portuguese in Bengal have left no cultural trace and exercised no influence on the literature of the province. The mass converts baptised in Southern India by Roberto di Nobili and Francis Xavier, degenerated in three generations into a caste which did no credit either to India or to Christianity. The Portuguese half-breeds and poor Christians of pure Indian race, shepherded by the Catholic priests in East Bengal, Chittagong and North Orissa (Balasore) belonged to the latter class and have failed to add anything to Bengal's heritage.

III. The Spread of Vaishnavism

During Mughal rule the entire religious life of Bengal was transformed by Vaishnavism. The basic principle of this creed is *bhakti* or personal devotion to God (as Krishna Vāsudeva) with an intensity of emotion akin to conjugal love. The theory of it had been known long before and in other parts of India too. But Chaitanya (1486-1533) by his teaching made it a reality to the masses of Bengal and Orissa. He, however did not found a church, and his spiritual influence would have ended with the death of the last of his personal disciples, after which he would have been dimly remembered as one of the thousands of God-intoxicated *sadhus* of India who had through the ages inspired and elevated their respective generations and then passed into the mists of oblivion. Such would have been the history of Jesus Christ but for Peter and Paul who created a Church and a theology after the passing away of their Master.

The permanence of Bengali Vaishnavism is due to the organisation of a sect—its ritual, its rules of life, its discipline, and its financial basis, by Nityānand and the creation of a special theology by the Seven Fathers of the Church (*Sapta-Goswami*). It is they who gave fixity and material form to the pure light which had emanated form the lips of their Master, though the word Church as understood in Christian Europe, is inapplicable to the countless loose groups of local subsects comprehended under the general name of Vaishnavs in Bengal, whose sole bond of union is a common spiritual heritage and differentiation from all other sects in the land. But despite this lack of disciplined organisation and of control by a hierarchy

of priests acting under one common supreme pontiff, the new religion of Chaitanya has made Bengali Hindu society what it is today. It has all but extinguished (except among the lowest classes) the worship of the Divine Creative Energy in its female form (*Shakti*) which used to prevail all over Bengal before the advent of Chaitanya. Shakti-worship which is better known under the name of Tantrikism—has declined almost universally in West Bengal and in a less marked degree in East and North Bengal; the new movement has left many of the lower castes unconverted, especially those living in the fringe areas covered with hill and jungle. But Vaishnavism, in the vast spaces of Bengal which it dominates, has produced two wholesome fruits: we owe to it the present-day almost total abolition of the ritualistic sacrifice of animals and the drinking of strong wine (*karan-bari*) as a religious duty. The unabashed prevalence of drunkenness in our polished society is now a thing of the past; witness the orgy of blood and wine in the Court of Raja Pratāpāditya on the day that Basant Ray was killed (*circa* 1600). Where the drink habit is now found among the Bengali Hindus (above the lowest castes), it is admitted as a vice and is practised under the veil of secrecy. This is the homage that the vice pays to Vaishnavism.

Even greater than this moral reformation of the upper and middle classes, has been the work of Vaishnavism in uplifting the lower ranks of society and the illiterate masses, by carrying religion to their doors through the device of Nām-sankirtan or chanting processions—which is spoken of as the unique contribution of Chaitanya to the spiritual life of the modern age. The new creed, like Methodism in England born two centuries later,—has opened a new life of knowledge and spirituality to the lower castes, and under its life-giving touch they have produced many Vaishnav saints and poets, scholars and leaders of thought. This was not possible in the old days of orthodox Brahmanic domination over society. Thus Vaishnavism has proved the saviour of the poor; it has proclaimed the dignity of every man as possessing within himself a particle of the divine soul (*Jiv-atma*). One of its greatest poets has sung :—

Listen, brother man!
Man is the greatest thing in the world,
Nothing else is so great.

The female sex, though to a lesser extent than the men,—have shared in the cultural uplift among the Vaishnavs and the door of knowledge has been opened to them by allowing them to read.

The new life breathed into Bengal Hinduism by Chaitanya's creed, burst forth in another direction. The Vaishnav Gosāins set

themselves to converting the aboriginal tribes and thus brought a new light into their lives after ages of neglect, contumely and superstition.

Sanskrit literature is the root of our general culture, no less than of theology, throughout Hindu India. A revived and widespread study of Sanskrit among all castes—(and not confined to the Brahman and physician castes) and the creation of a new Bengali literature with a marked popular appeal, are among our gains from this creed during the Mughal age. It has vivified and sweetened Bengal's intellectual life, no less than the spiritual,—and greatly broadened the basis of our culture. The Vaishnav leaders (including Chaitanya himself) were passionate collectors of Sanskrit manuscripts from the other parts of India.

The educative effect of this creed was helped and enhanced by the pilgrimages from Bengal to Jagannāth Puri and Mathurā-Vrindāvan, which became extensively popular with the establishment of Mughal peace, and which brought Bengal into close contact with the life and thought developed in the heart of this rich Empire, at the capital cities of Benares and Allahabad, Agra and Delhi (—the last place *en route* to Kurukshetra). Vrindāvan became a cultural colony of greater Bengal. In short, Vaishnavism is our abiding gift to Orissa and Assam.

The spirit of the new Vaishnavism had the closest affinity to the dreamy and emotional Bengali character and intensified these natural tendencies of our race. Wherever it spread it generated a deeply felt tenderness for children and the weak, which gave a new tinge altogether to our domestic life and popular literature. But at the same time by its exaltation of pacifism and patient suffering,—"humility lower than that of the trodden grass, endurance greater than that of the felled tree,"—it sapped the martial instinct of the race and made the people too soft to conduct national defence. Vaishnavism has taught millions of Bengali Hindus to abstain from meat and even fish, and live on a purely vegetarian diet. The Vairāgis of Rajputana, like the Vaishnavas of Bengal who bore the same popular name of *Vairagis*, were householders and married men, but they formed a sect of fighting monks and hired themselves and their weapons out for the defence of kingdoms and temples. So also did the Nāgā Gosāins, famous in our 18th century history, who however were worshippers of Shiva and vowed to celibacy. Hence the spread of Vaishnavism in Assam naturally alarmed its kings : In the reign of Supātphā (Gadādhar Singh, 1681—1696), "the country was full of neo-Vaishnav preceptors and their followers, who claimed exemption from the universal liability to fight . . . This caused serious inconvenience . . . Gadādhar Singh feared the physical

deterioration that might ensure if his people obeyed the injunction of the Gosāins and abstained from eating the flesh of cattle, swine and fowls, and from indulging in strong drinks . . . He therefore resolved to break the power of the Gosāins." (Gait, *Hist. of Assam,* 168, also 184.) The same was true of Bengal Vaishnavism; it relaxed the fibres of the national character in the field of action, though it undoubtedly prompted holy living and noble thinking.

Sanskrit learning, except in the form of dry logic and barren philosophical wrangling, had been greatly crippled in Bengal by the disappearance of Court patronage at the fall of Hindu independence at the end of the 12th century. In the 16th and 17th centuries it greatly revived under the influence of Vaishnavism; but this renaissance was the work of the people themselves. The direct action of the Government, however, fostered our education in another and quite unexpected direction. Todar Mal's organisation of the State revenue service had forced the Hindu clerks and account-keepers to learn the Persian language, in which all records of this department had henceforth to be written. In Bengal Todar Mal's elaborate land system (*zabti*) was never applied; but ambitious local Hindus and Muslims (of both of whom the mother tongue was Bengali) were now forced to learn the Persian language in order to get some share in the vastly extended secretarial work of the Mughal provincial administration. In Bengal, the State revenue was collected through middlemen or zamindars in the lump (and not as in Upper India from the cultivators directly); hence the accounts were kept in Bengali (the sole language of the peasantry and of the army of local revenue underlings), and therefore before the Mughal conquest very few Bengalis had any occasion to learn Persian. Under Mughal rule the higher posts in the revenue, accounts and secretariat departments were reserved for Muslims and Hindus from Upper India, such as Khatris from the Panjab and Agra and Lālās from the U. P. It was only when Murshid Quli Khan established a local dynasty in Bengal that these high posts passed into the hands of Bengalis, many of whom were Hindus well versed in Persian composition. Unlike the independent Sultans of Bengal, the constantly changing subahdārs of the Mughal times had no occasion to learn Bengali, and hence the agents (*vakils*) of the local zamindārs at their Courts had to be masters of Persian. Gradually (and notably in the 18th century) Persian culture infiltrated from the subahdār's Court to that of the great Hindu Rajahs—such as those of Nadia and Burdwan. This is best illustrated by the varied learning of Bhārat Chandra Rāy Gunākar, the Court poet of Nadia.

But the Mughal provincial administration was so much more developed than that of the foregoing Sultans and ramified into so

many branches with the advance of civilisation, that an adequate number of hands could not be imported from Upper India, and a large number of Bengalis had to be employed in its middle ranks, and these had to master the Persian language as a qualification for office. Thus Persian literature and a special school of Sufi poetry spread in Bengali Hindu society no less than in Muslim.

The local study of Persian helped to bring the higher minds among the conquerors and the conquered together in Sufi brotherhoods. In the 18th century there was a fairly prolific crop of Sufi verses written in Persian in Bengal; though worthless as poetry, they are of value as illustrating the fusion of cultures.

IV. Changes in Muslim Society

Islam in Bengal, too, experienced a new birth in consequence of the Mughal conquest. Apart from the highly cultured subahdārs and generals—some of them of the royal blood and some intimately connected with the Emperor,—and learned chancellors and secretaries, who were deputed to Bengal in regular official succession and who brought into the local Muslim society the fresh breath of a higher culture from the imperial capital,—numbers of scholarly Muslims from Upper India made their homes in this rich province after it had become a permanent and well-administered part of the Empire of Delhi. The great increase of oceanic communication between Bengal and the western lands due to the vast expansion of our sea-borne trade in the middle 17th century, tempted cultured Shias of Persia—scholars, physicians, traders—to come and settle in Bengal. A voyage from Bandar Abbas or Basra to Hughly was much cheaper and easier than the land-journey across Upper India, either through the Afghan passes or *via* the port of Surat. This immigration of eminent Persians into Bengal was accelerated when in the late 17th century the Safavi royal house of Persia fell into rapid moral decay, and misgovernment and official tyranny made life in the homeland intolerable to many a worthy son of Irān. The climax of the movement was reached after Murshid Quli Khan had established in Bengal what was practically a Shia dynasty, ever ready to welcome and honour the wandering talent and piety of the centre of that creed.

Wandering saints and preachers had been used to visiting Bengal long before the Mughal conquest. But this stream became ampler in volume after the annexation of the province to the Empire of Delhi. In the wake of the officials and troops who marched from the west to the east regularly once every three or four years, came religious teachers, Sufi philosophers and religious mendicants calling themselves *darvishes* and *auliyas*. The wealth of this province—

"hell well-stocked with bread," *duzakh pur az nan*,—also attracted from abroad passed scholars in Arabic, in search of some less crowded market for their talents. Muslim society in Bengal derived full advantage from this infusion of fresh light from the west. What the Vaishnav religion did for the Hindus of Bengal, was done for their Muslim neighbours by the Mughal conquest; this province was intimately joined to the general religious and cultural movements of the rest of India; its narrow isolation was broken.

V. The enemies of Mughal peace and unification— the Bara Bhuiyas.

A false provincial patriotism has led modern Bengali writers to glorify the Bāra Bhuiyās of Bengal as the champions of national independence against foreign invaders. They were nothing of the sort. Firstly, they were nearly all of them upstarts, who had in their own persons—or one generation earlier—grabbed at some portion of the dissolving Karrāni kingdom of Bengal and set up as masterless Rajas in their different corners of the country, especially in the inaccessible regions of the sea-coast in Khulnā and Bāqarganj or beyond the mighty barrier of the Brahmaputra in Dacca and the still remoter jungles of North Mymensingh and Sylhet. These mushroom captains of plundering bands have been likened to the hereditary chieftains of the Sisodiā and Rāthor clans of Rajputānā who fought the Mughals in defence of the homes they had bought with the blood of their ancestors through centuries of struggle.

The height of absurdity is reached when our dramatists call Pratāpāditya of Jessor as the counterpart of Mahārānā Pratāp Singh of Mewār. It is therefore necessary to debunk the Bengali "hero" by turning the dry light of history on him. His father was Srihari, a Kāyastha writer in the service of Dāud Karrāni, who rose to be that chief's confidant after the murder of the worthy wazir Ludi Khan [*Ak.* iii. 172]. On the fall of Dāud, Srihari fled away with his own wealth and the Government treasure in his custody, and set up for himself in the extreme south of the Khulnā district—to which the sea was very much closer then than now. In this marshy land intersected by a maze of channels, he built a home for his family and a safe refuge for fugitives from the advancing tide of invasion. The ex-'*amla* took the grandiloquent title of the Indian Charlemagne,—Maharaj Vikramāditya, and could give his son and heir a no lesser title than Pratāpāditya,—reminiscent of the official designations of the great Gupta Emperors of antiquity. Pratāpāditya never once defeated any Mughal army in pitched battle; his son and general Udayāditya took to flight at the first sign of a losing

naval battle (at Sālka), and Pratāpāditya himself tamely submitted to the Mughal general without holding out till he was assured of safety to life and honour. If we call such a man "the Pratāp Singh of Bengal," then we must admit that the great hero of Haldighāt, in his transit to Bengal

Had suffered a sea-change
Into something mean and strange.

As for Kedār Rāi, his son Chānd Rāi allied himself with the Afghan freebooters who had broken out of Orissa and were ravaging South Bengal, but he was killed in making a treacherous attack on his dear allies. The father, in a wiser alliance with 'Isā Khan, fought well and died in action. But where was the nation in all this?

We must not confound the Bāra Bhuiyās with the Rājahs of Tipperah Kāmrup and Kuch Bihār, who were representatives of long established tribal chieftains. Pratāpāditya and Kedār Rāi, 'Isā Khan and Ānwār Ghāzi were not tribal heads, nor scions of any old and decayed royal house. They were at best bloated zamindars, who whould have been glad to save their estates by paying annual revenues if the Karrāni dynasty had not been subverted and a strong Sultan like Sulaimān had filled the throne of Bengal. The eclipse of royal authority at the centre of the Government of Bengal was the opportunity of these usurpers of neighbours' territories; they had their brief day in the twilight between the setting Afghan kingship and the rising Mughal empire in Bengal; and when the Mughal power came out, under Islām Khan, in full splendour, they vanished into the obscurity from which they had risen.

If the Mughals who came in 1574 must be called foreign invaders, so were the Karrānis who came in 1560 and the Lohānis who were mere servants of the Karrānis.

VI. East Bengal's isolation broken.

We know really nothing definite about the state of civilisation and the condition of the people in East Bengal in the Hindu period. There were no doubt rich Courts with a developed culture and art of their own in the southern and more civilised portion of it, such as Dacca, Comilla and Chittagong. But no detailed or clear account of these capitals, not even complete genealogies of their kings, have come down to us. As for the common people, especially those living in the back villages, the huge fertile sandbanks (*char*-land), and the deltaic swamps of Bāqarganj and Khulnā, their unceasing strife with the capricious forces of nature and labour to wrest a bare

livelihood from the soil, left them no leisure to develop any noticeable civilisation, art or commerce.

But one thing seems certain. The force of Aryan colonisation (however meagre in volume) and Aryan culture (however diluted with Dravidian cult and culture) was all but exhausted when they reached the country east of the Brahmaputra and old Tistā rivers and north of an east-west line drawn through the middle of the Pabna district. In these regions the people up to the foot-holds of the hills were Mongoloid by race, spirit-worshippers by religion, and speakers of many local dialects which had no written literature and were foreign to the literary Bengali of Gaud, Varendri and Rārh. By the inexorable force of geography, the people of west Bengal, especially in the Gangetic valley were more largely and more deeply subject to the Aryan or Aryo-Dravidian influence that filtrated through Anga (Bhāgalpur) than the natives of East Bengal. In an earlier age Buddhism had dominated the country from Kāmrup to Chittagong, and evidence of it is still to be found in literary references and antiquarian remains. But at the time of the Muslim conquest (1230 A.D.) and for some centuries before it, the religion of the masses in East Bengal—and indeed of many of the gentry too—was Tāntrik Hinduism, which could be hardly distinguished from the spirit-worship and magic of later Buddhism, as still found in Tibet. In the Hindu period, Sanskrit scholars, Hindu physicians, and eminent Brāhman priests from the west freely crossed the river barrier and settled in East Bengal; and, in the opposite direction, pilgrims from East Bengal used to visit the Courts and famous shrines of west Bengal. But they represented only the thin upper crust of society, and were concentrated in the large towns and rich monasteries of Banga-desh. But on the fall of Nadia and Gaur to the Muslims even this little interchange of cultures ceased. For some time after, the mass of the people east of the Tistā and the Brahmaputra remained Hindus, but their religion was not akin to that of the Hindus of Gaur or Rārh. They had no learned Brāhman priesthood, no Sanskrit scriptures, no Vedic ritual. Their worship was almost everywhere conducted by illiterate animistic priests or more properly witch-doctors.

Despised and neglected by the educated Aryan priesthood, with no resident Brāhman clergy to look after their religious instruction or conduct their rites properly, the Hindu masses of East Bengal remained as sheep without a spiritual shepherd, just like their Mongoloid Buddhistic brethren of Kāmrup and Arakan. Hence, when Shāh Jalāl (of Sylhet) and other missionaries of the Crescent arrived to preach Islam to them, no worthy priests of Hinduism

came forth to accept the challenge, and the masses of East Bengal were easily converted to Islam *en masse* from spirit-worship (call it later Buddhism or Tantrik Hinduism as you please, these are only two names for the same thing). This is the underlying meaning of the legends still current about the early missionaries of Islam in Sylhet and Rājgir (south Bihar) and their success in defeating the local Hindu priests (called jogis) by superior miracle-working power.

Even after the last Hindu royal house in Dacca had been extinguished, the Islamic power in East Bengal was often at war with the Islamic power of Lakhnāvati or Sātgāon.

This isolation was finally and fully broken when Mughal rule was established in Bengal and that province was made a normal subah of the Empire. The trans-Brahmaputra country was henceforth closely connected westwards with the rest of Bengal and the whole of Upper India. The civilising of East Bengal (if I may be permitted the expression) began with Islām Khan's conquests from Dacca as his base, and the process was completed when the later viceroys made that city the seat of their government. But we had to wait for Murshid Quli Khan before Mymensingh and Sylhet, Barisal and Jessore were made regular tribute-paying districts of the Bengal subah.

VII. List of Mughal Viceroys of Bengal

Conquering generals :—

1. Mun'im Khan, Kh-i-Kh., appointed 1574, died 23 Oct. 1575 (of illness.).
2. Husain Quli Beg, Kh-i-Jahān, appointed and given *congee*, 15 Nov. 1575, died of illness 19 Dec. 1578. Ism'ail Quli (brothers of no. 2) officiated for four months after him.
3. Muzaffar Kh. Turbati, arrives Apr. 1579, murdered by mutineers, 19 April 1580.
   Usurpation by mutinous officers, 1580-1582.
4. Kh-i-'Āzam (Mirzā 'Aziz Kokah), given *congee* 6 Apr. 1582 "for subduing Bengal," enters Teliagarhi, 20 March 1583,—from Bengal sent off to N. Bihar, 18 May 1583. Wazir Kh. officiates during interval.
5. Shāhbāz Kh. given *congee* 18 May 1583, reaches Bengal, end of Oct. 1583—absent in his Bihar fief, Oct-Dec. 1584,—transferred to Bihar, *c.* 3 Mar. 1585.
6. Sādiq Kh. appointed *c.* 3 Mar. 1585. Shāhbāz Kh. returns to Bengal, 30 Jan. 1586, is removed Nov.
7. Wazir Kh. app. subahdār 24 Nov. 1586—dies of illness. early Aug. 1587.

8. Sa'id Kh. app. 26 Aug. 1587,—May 1594.
9. Mān S. Kachhwā, app. 17 March 1594,—leaves Court at Lahore on 4 May 1594 for Bengal. End of 1599, Mān S. permitted to live at Ajmir,—Māha S. acts as deputy during his absence. End of 1600. Mān S. hastens back to Bengal. Feb. 1605, leaves Bengal for Agra. *c.* Sep. 1606, transf. from Bengal to Bihār.
10. Qutbuddin Kh. Kokah (Shaikh Khuban). *c.* Sep. 1606.—*c.* May 1607, murdered.
11. Jahāngir Quli Beg (orig. a slave) app. *c.* May 1607; died in Bengal April 1608.

Regular administrators :—

12. Islām Kh. (Shaikh 'Ala-ud-din Chishti) app. in May 1608, reaches Rajmahal early June 1608. Dies 21 Aug. 1613. Shaikh Hushang officiates.
13. Qāsim Kh. Chishti (also entitled Muhtasham Kh. younger brother of No. 12) app. mid, Sep. 1613, took over charge 6 May 1614. Recalled April 1617.
14. Ibrāhim Kh. Fath-i-Jang, (br. of Nur Jahān), joined at Rajmahal, early Nov. 1617. Killed in battle, *c.* 20 Apr. 1624. *Interregnum*: Shah Jahan's viceroy Dārāb Kh.
15. Mahābat Kh. appointed early March 1625, left Bengal early Feb. 1626,—his son Khānazād Kh. officiates.
16. Mukarram Kh., Chishti Shaikh, app. mid. 1626. drowned early Feb. 1627.
17. Fidāi Kh. (Mirzā Hedāyet-ullah) app. late March 1627. dismissed, 4 Feb. 1628.
18. Qāsim Kh. Juyini (son of Mir Murād) app. at Agra 4 Feb. given *congee* 6 Aug. 1628. Died 19 Sep. 1632. (Married Nur Jahān's sister.)
19. 'Āzam Kh. Mir Md. Bāqar, (also Irādat Kh.) app. end of Oct. 1632, removed 12 Mar. 1635.
20. Islām Kh. Mashhadi, given *congee*, 11 Apr. 1635; recalled (Jan. 39), reaches Court 23 Oct. 1639. Saif Kh. officiates.
21. Prince Muhammad Shujā', given *congee*, 23 Feb. 1639, is granted subahdāri of Orissa also, May 1642. Reaches Court in Kabul, on recall, 19 May, 1647. I'tiqād Kh. officiates during Shujā's absence. Shujā' again given *congee* for Bengal, 16 Feb. 1648; in July gets Orissa in addition. Reaches Court in Kabul 17 April 1652. Leaves for Bengal, 21 July 1652. Is given Bihār by Aurangzib, July 1658—leaves Patna for Agra Oct. 1658;

is defeated at Khajwa (5 Jan. 1659) and pursued into Bengal,—abandons Dacca and Bengal, 6 May 1660.

22. Mu'azzam Kh. (Mir Jumlā), Kh-i-Kh. app. June 1660—dies at Khizirpur, 31 Mar. 1663. Interval—Dilir Kh. in charge, pending arrival of Dāud Kh. who arrives at Khizirpur 27 Sep. 1663.

23. Shāista Kh. (br. of Mumtāz Mahal), Āmir-ul-umāra. app. May 1663, reaches Rajmahal on 8 March 1664,—reaches Dacca Dec. 1664. Gets Orissa in addition March 1676. Recalled from Bengal, reaches Court May 1678.

24. Fidāi Kh. ('Āzam Kh. Kokah, Muzaffar Husain), app. early in 1678 (?), is dismissed but dies at Dacca 24 May 1678.

25. Prince Muhammad 'Āzam (Orissa also)—app. June 1678, reaches Dacca 29 July 1678; leaves Dacca on recall 12 Oct. 1679. Shāista Kh. reapp. 9 Sep. 1679, reaches Dacca Jan. 1680. Leaves Bengal on transfer to Agra, *c.* June 1688.

26. Kh-i-Jahān (br. of No. 24), reaches Dacca in July 1688. dismissed *c.* May 1689.

27. Ibrāhim Kh. joins at Dacca June 1689. Leaves Bengal, Jan. 1698.

28. Prince 'Azim-ud-din (later 'Azim-ush-shān) app. *c.* June 1697, reaches Burdwan, Nov. 1697. In Jan. 1703 gets Bihār also, and under orders of Aurangzib removes from Dacca to Patna, which he was allowed to name 'Azimābād. Held *in absentia* the subahdāri of Bengal, till his death (8 March 1712). His son Farrukh-Siyar held the post of deputy subahdār on his behalf, till July 1710, when Khān-i-'Ālam (Khān-i-Jahān II, Sipahdār Kh.) was appointed deputy subahdār of Bengal, while Farrukh-Siyar held a similar agency for his father in Bihār. During Jahāndār Shah's short reign (1712) Kh-i-'Ālam continued as substantive subahdār of Bengal, but was removed from that office on the accession of Farrukh-Siyar (Delhi, 9 Jan. 1713) and the viceroyalty of Bengal was conferred on paper on the new Emperor's infant son Farkhunda Siyar, with Murshid Quli as his deputy. The infant died in a few months (2 May 1713) after which the Bengal subahdāri was conferred on Mir Jumla ('Ubāidullah, Muzaffar Jang, Khān-i-Khānān, Mu'tamid-ul-mulk), *in absentia*, with Murshid Quli as his deputy. Mir Jumla continued to stay at Court, and

was given *congee* for his charge on 4 Dec. 1714, but after reaching Patna on 18 June 1715, did not proceed further and finally sneaked back to Delhi (10 Jan. 1716.)

29. Murshid Quli Kh. (name Md. Hādi, titles Kārtalb Kh. 1697, Murshid Quli Kh. 1703, Ja'far Kh. 1714, 'Ala-ud-daulah Ja'far Kh. Nasiri, Mutaman-ul-mulk,—latterly known officially as Ja'far Kh.) formally appointed subahdār of Bengal before Aug. 1717, and continued as such till his death on 30 June 1727.
30. Shujā'-ud-din Md. Kh. 1727—1739 (d. 13 March 1739.)
31. Sarfarāz Kh. 1739—1740 (d. 9 Apr. 1740).
32. Aliwardi Kh. Mahābat Jang, 1740—1756 (d. 9 Apr. 1756)
33. Sirāj-ud-daulah, 1756—1757, (d. 4 July 1757).

VIII. List of Mughal governors of Orissa.

The province was placed in charge of the Bengal subahdār for some years after its first conquest. The line of its separate subahdārs begins in Jahāngir's reign.

1. Hāshim Kh., 26 Sep. 1607—24 May 1611.
2. Rajah Kalyān (son of Rajah Todar Mal) 1611—1617.
3. Mukarram Khan 1617—
4. Hasan Ali Kh. Turkmān, 1620—
5. Mirzā Āhmad Beg Kh. (son of Nur Jahān's brother), 1621—1624. *Interregnum :* Shah Jahan's rebellion, 1624—1628.
6. Bāqar Kh. Najam-i-Sāni, 1628—1632.
7. Mu'taqad Kh. (Mirzā Maki), 1632—1641.
8. Shāh Nawāz Kh. 1641—1642.
9. Prince Muhammad Shujā', app. 7 Mar. 1642, governs by his deputies—

(a) Md. Zamān Tehrāni, 1642—45. Mu'taqad Kh., (a second time) 21 Nov. 1645—26 July 1648. Prince Muhammad Shujā' given Orissa again, July 1648, governs by his deputies—

(b) Jān Beg Haravi, 1648—51.

(c) Muhammad Hayāt, 19 Nov. 1651—

(d) Mir Samsām-ud-daulah Ānju app. 3 Oct. 1654; dies Mar. 1655.[1]

[1] Of Mir Samsam-ud-daulah we learn from the *Muraq'at-i-Hasan* (p. 228 of my ms.) that he died on the way at Jajpur before reaching Cuttack (to assume his office). Of Rashid Kh. (son of Iftikhar Kh. and grandson of Asalat Kh.) we learn only of the appointment but there is no reference at all to him in the *Muraqa't*,

(e) Rashid Kh. app. 14 Apr. 1655?
(f) Tarbiyat Kh. (Shafi'-ullah Barlās)? 1655—1657.

10. Ihtishām Kh. (Shaikh Farid Chishti, also entitled Ikhlas Kh.) Nov. 1659—Sep. 1660.
11. Khan-i-Daurān (Sayid Mahmud, son of Kh. Daurān Nasrat Jang Naqshbandi), Sep. 1660—Sep. 1667; died in Orissa, news of his death reached Emperor on 7th Dec. 1667.
12. Alawardi Khan (J'afar Saljuq, eldest son of Alawardi Kh. I. who was slain by Shuja') app. at Court 7th Sep. 1667.
13. Tarbiyat Khan Barlas, 1667—Oct. 1669.
14. Safi Khan, app. Oct. 1669, (*M.A.* 90).
15. Sa'dullah Kh.?
16. Rashid Khan?—Mar. 1676.
17. Shāista Khan, Amir-ul-umara, March 1676—Dec. 1677.
18. Prince Md. 'Āzam, through his deputy Nurullah, July 1678 —Oct. 1679. Shāista Khan again, Jan. 1680—Jan 1688, governs through deputies: Buzurg Ummed Kh. (his eldest son), Irādat Kh. (s. of Shāista), app. Oct. 1682, but cancelled. Abu Nasar (s. of Shāista) app. 14 Jan. 1683, (after some time made substantive subahdār).
19. ? 1689—1698, probably Ibrāhim Kh. (Subahdār of Bengal).
20. Ghaznafar Kh. June 1698—Aug. 1700, dies in Orissa.
21. 'Askar Kh. Sep. 1700—Dec. 1702, dies in the province.
22. Murshid Quli Kh. 1703—1710.
23. Khan-i-'Ālam (also Khan-i-Jahān II.) Jan. 1711—6th May 1714? Murshid Quli Khan again, May 1714—1727. governs through his deputy Shujā'-ud-din Md. Kh. *c.* 1717—1727.
24. Shujā'-ud-din Md. Kh. 1727—1739, governs through his deputies Md. Taqi (who died 1734) and Murshid Quli Kh. II. (Mirzā Lutfullah, Rustam-i-Jang) 1734—1741.

nor his actual joining and removal in Waris; his was evidently a paper appointment which was soon afterwards cancelled. As for Tarbiyat Kh. we learn from the *Masir-ul-umara*, i. 494. and from no other source, not even Waris, that in Shah Jahan's 29th year (29 Mar 1655—16 March 1656) he was app. deputy subahdar of Orissa as agent of Prince Shuja'. He was serving in these eastern provinces when Mir Jumla was appd. imperial wazir (July 1656); but on 20 Dec. 1657 T. was appointed subahdar of Oudh, being then present at the imperial Court at Agra, (Kambu, Bib. Ind. iii. 271)—his Orissa tenure having ended before that date.

Alawardi Kh. No. 12 as governor is mentioned in the *Akhbarat* only, which are silent about Tarbiyat Kh.! The *Akhbarat* incidentally mention a Saf Shikan Kh. as a predecessor of Shaista Kh. in the government of Orissa.

25. Sarfaraz Kh. 1739—1740. Murshid Quli II. continues as his deputy.
26. Aliwardi Kh. (Mahābat Jang) 1740—1745, governs through his deputies Sayyid Ahmad (Saulat Jang) 1741, Shaikh Ma'sum 1742, and Raja Durlabh Rām 1745. Double Government till 1751, when ceded to the Marathas by treaty.

CHAPTER XIII

STATE OF BENGAL UNDER JAHĀNGIR.

1. Broad features of Bengal history under Jahāngir.

The reign of Jahāngir forms a definite landmark in the history of Bengal. Under Akbar, Mughal rule in Bengal was more like an armed occupation than a settled administration. The governors of Akbar's time, notably Rājā Mān Singh, contended themselves with securing the nominal submission of the old independent Afghan and Hindu zamindars, the 'Bāra Bhuiyās' being the most important of them, and did not make any serious attempt to subjugate them and bring them under the direct control of the Government. It was early in the reign of Jahāngir that organised and effective steps were taken to crush all the independent zamindars and impose a uniform administrative system over the entire territory. For accomplishing this task, a new policy was adopted, which proved eminently successful. While the governors of Akbar's time adopted a simple, straightforward, and uniform policy in regard to the zamindars and allowed them to enjoy practical independence so long as they professed loyalty and paid tributes to the Emperor, the governors of Jahāngir's reign especially, Islām Khan, followed a more diplomatic and tortuous line of action. The zamindars, big and small, seem to have been played off one against the others, with promises of imperial favour and reward, sometimes in the shape of territories, obviously with a view to preventing a unified and concerted resistance, until all of them, one after another, were deprived of their independence and reduced to vassalage.

The reign of Jahāngir also witnessed the greatest extension of the political influence and authority and the territorial limits of the Mughal empire on the north-eastern frontier. Kuch Bihar was subjugated (in 1609), and Kāmrup conquered and made a part and parcel of the Bengal subah (in 1612), so that the frontier of Mughal India reached as far as the bank of the river Bar Nadi.

II. Bāra Bhuiyās and other Local Potentates

A review of the political geography, and, particularly, of the distribution of political power in Bengal at the beginning of Jahāngir's reign is necessary if we are to understand the gradual process of conquest and consolidation.

Political Geography: The subah of Bengal proper at the beginning of Jahāngir's reign formally comprised a larger tract of territory than is included in the present-day British province of Bengal. On the north and the west it included a few mahals now belonging to the Bhāgalpur and Purneā Districts of Bihar, while towards the east it included Sylhet, now forming part of the Assam province. Orissā, though included in the rent-roll of the Bengal subah in the *Ain-i-Akbari*, remained, to all intents and purposes, a separate administrative unit with its own governor. The frontiers of Bengal at this time seem to have run from the famous pass of Teliāgarhi in the north-west to Jogdiā, occupying the south-eastern portion of the Noakhali District in the south-east ; (Chittagong remained really outside the control of the Mughal Emperors till its conquest by Shāista Khan in 1666) ; and from Patgong (west of Kuch Bihar) in the extreme north, and Baritalā opposite Hātsilāh, in the Kari Bāri hills in the north-east, to Hijli (south-eastern portion of Midnapore) on the south-west.

The effective control of the Mughal Emperor was, however confined to very narrow limits, and did not stretch far beyond the capital city and the few fortified posts set up by the imperial faujdars throughout the country. Rāj-mahal (which was established by Raja Mān Singh in 1595) continued to be the capital at the beginning of Jahāngir's reign. As regards the fortified *thānahs* of the Bengal subah of this period, the *Akbarnamah* and the *Baharistan* mention the more important amongst them. Ghorāghāt, on the right bank of the Karatoyā, at present included in the Rangpur District, was a fortified post of great strategic value, standing on the south-western border of the Kuch Bihar State. As the rebellious Afghans frequently sought asylum in Kuch Bihar through Ghorāghāt, this region was parcelled out amongst faithful Afghan vassals, and attempts were also made to establish friendly relations with the kings of Kuch Bihar. At Sherpur[1], in Mymensingh, was another fort made by Raja Mān Singh, and named, after Prince Salim, as Salimnagar, Alapsing, a well known pargana in Mymensingh, facing Bokāinagar, the stronghold of Khwaja 'Usman, was another important *thānah*. A number of *thānahs* were made around the post of Dacca : Bhawāl, about 16 miles north-east of Dacca, Tok, about 22 miles north of Bhawāl, opposite Egarasindur, and Trimohāni, marking the confluence of the Ganges (i. e. the Padma), Lakhyā and the Brahmaputra (Megnā) near Narayanganj, were the most

[1] This was *Sherpur Atāi*, not to be confounded with *Sherpur Murchā* in the Bogrā district.

important. Outside these *thānahs* lay the domain of numerous zamindars holding practically independent sway.

From the *Baharistan,* we get a fair idea of the prominent zamindars who flourished in Bengal at the beginning of Jahāngir's reign. On the west, three noted zamindars are mentioned whose territories lay adjacent to one another—Bir Hamir, holding sway, in Birbhum and Bānkurā, Shams Khan in Pachet on the south-west, and Salim Khan in Hijli, to the south-east of Pachet. All of them seem to have tendered only nominal submission to Islām Khan. For they did neither attend the viceregal court nor render personal service like the other vassals. Again, all of them appear to have shaken off their vassalage during the interregnum following Islām Khān's death, and a punitive expedition sent by Qāsim Khān against them, did not yield any satisfactory result. After Sālim Khān's death, his nephew Bahādur Khān proved to be more refractory than the rest. He openly rebelled in the time of Ibrāhim Khān Fath-jang, and was disarmed after a good deal of fighting. A few small zamindars are also mentioned, ruling in territories now included mostly in the Midnapore district: Birbhān or Chandrabhān, zamindar of Chandrakonā, his minor relative Dalpat, zamindār of Bardā and Jhakra (Jharagrām ?), of whom the former seems to have followed the neighbouring zamindārs in their frequent defiance of the imperial authority.

East of the territories of Bīr Hamīr, Shams Khān and Salīm Khān, lay the domain of three other zamindārs stretching along the Ganges, now forming part of the Rajshahi and Pabna Districts: Pitambar, the progenitor of the Putia Raj-family, and his nephew Ananta, ruling in Chilājuwār, forming part of the pargana of Bhāturiābāzu, and Ilah Bakhsh son of Barkhūrdār, ruler of Alāipur, south-east of Putia, all of whom submitted to the Mughals after some resistance.

Further to the east, three other zamindārs are mentioned, ruling between them the greater part of the Pabna District: Mīrzā Mūmin, son of Ma'sūm Khān Kābuli, who was a powerful ally of 'Isā Khān and had fought hard against the officers of Akbar till his death in May, 1599, with Chātmohar as his seat of power, Dariya Khān, son of Khān 'Ālam Bahbūdī, and Madhu Ray, zamindār of Khalsi. All of them were close followers of Mūsā Khān and fought against Islām Khān under his inspiration and guidance. Closely associated with them in their hostility to the Mughals was Binod Ray, zamindār of Chāndpratāp, a well-known pargana in the Mānikganj subdivision of the Dacca District. Another noted zamindār ruling in Shāhzādapur in the north-east of the Pabna District was Raja Ray, who was one of the earliest to submit to Islām Khān.

Fathabad, modern Faridpur, was the seat of Majlis Qutb, who was in close alliance with Mūsā Khān and fought hard to preserve his independence. A very prominent zamindār of this region was Raja Satrajit, son of Raja Mukunda. He was the ruler of Bhushnā, and his territories covered portions of modern Jessore and Faridpur. Satrajit also was one of the earliest to accept the imperial vassalage, and his eventful and chequered career forms an important part of the history of Bengal under Jahāngīr and Shāh Jahān for more than a quarter of a century (1609—1636). He played a prominent part in the consolidation of the Mughal authority in Bengal, and played a no less conspicuous part in the Mughal conquest of Kamrup and in the administration of the conquered territory. He also participated in the Mughal expedition against Assam.

Closely associated with Satrajit in his services to the Mughals was Raja Raghunāth, zamindar of Shushang, whose territories covered the north-eastern border of the Mymensingh District. He readily submitted to the Mughals, obviously to seek their help in recovering his family who had been kept in confinement by the Kāmrup king Parikshit Nārāyān, and when this was accomplished, he rendered long and devoted service to the Mughal cause in Bengal and Kāmrup, participating, particularly, in the campaigns against Mūsa Khān, Bāyizīd Karrānī of Sylhet and Parikshit Nārāyān of Kāmrup, and also in the administration of Kāmrup after its annexation.

Raja Pratapaditya of Jessore: was known to all as one of the most powerful zamindars of Bengal of this age. The *Baharistan* and the travel-diary of Abdul Latif and the contemporary European writers, particularly, the Jesuits, all testify to his personal ability, poilitical preeminence, material resources, and martial strength, particularly, in war-boats. His territories covered the greater part of what is now included in the Jessore Khulna and Backerganj Districts, while his capital occupied a strategic position at the confluence of the Jumnā and Ichhāmati rivers and was popularly known as 'Dhumghāt', a strongly fortified post. A careful study of the old sources in the light of the *Baharistan* enables the modern historian to clear much of the legend, obscurity, and confusion that has gathered round Pratapaditya's life and career.

Adjacent to Pratapaditya's kingdom on the east lay the domain of a second powerful Hindu zamindar, Raja Rāmchandra of Bākla, which now forms part of the Backerganj District. He was the son of Raja Kandarpa Nārāyan and son-in-law of Raja Pratāpāditya. Though a minor, his ability, intelligence, and political power was great, and the Jesuit missionaries who visited his court and kingdom all speak of him in high terms. He is reputed to have defeated and

captured Lakshman Mānikya, the most famous of the Rajas of Bhuluā.

Though the early history of the chiefs of Bhuluā is obscure, it seems fairly clear that the fortunes of the House of Bhuluā, at least in the 16th century, were linked mostly with those of Tipperā on the north-east, and some times with Arakan on the south-east and Baklā on the south-west. Lakshman Mānikya's son, Ananta Mānikya, was the ruler of Bhuluā at the beginning of Jahāngīr's reign. He ruled over a large territory now forming the Noakhali District, which was of great strategical importance as commanding the route to and from Arakan, particularly, Chittagong, the realm of the powerful Arakan (Magh) king, who, along with his subjects, the Maghs, and his protégés, the Feringi pirates, proved such a serious enemy of Mughal peace in Bengal. Consequently Bhuluā was one of the earliest tracts to feel the weight of the Mughal arms and to be annexed to the Bengal subāh. Two fortified posts in the conquered tract, one at Bhuluā, the capital, the other at Jogdiā, on the eastern frontier, supplied the Mughals with convenient bases of operation against the Arakan king and the Magh and Feringi pirates who so frequently raided Bengal. Mūsa Khān Masnad-i-'Ālā was undoubtedly the most powerful and formidable of the zamindars of Bengal at the beginning of Jahāngīr's reign. He had succeeded his father, 'Īsā Khān, in September, 1599, and he continued his father's policy of unrelenting hostility to the Mughals, only with this difference that while 'Īsā Khān professed lip-deep obedience to the Mughal Emperor, Mūsā Khān cast off such outward professions of loyalty, and openly fought for his independence as long as he could.

Mūsā Khān inherited from his father a vast territory comprising about a half of the present Dacca District, half of modern Tippera, almost the whole of Mymensingh, except Sushang (the domain of Raja Raghunāth) and a portion ceded to Khwāja 'Usmān, and perhaps some portions of the present Districts of Rangpur, Bogra, and Pabna. The centre of Mūsā Khān's political authority was, however, the strategic region south-east of modern Dacca, where the Ganges (Padmā), the Lakhiyā, and the Brahmaputra (Megnā) formerly met. According to the *Bahāristān,* Mūsā Khān's fort of Khizrpur stood near the confluence of the river Dulai and the Lakhiyā, commanding the only water route to Dacca from this side. Opposite Khizrpur on the river Lakhiyā, stood Kātrābhu, the family residence of Mūsā Khān, and opposite modern Narayanganj stood Qadam Rasul, another fortified post of Mūsā Khān. About three miles east of Khizrpur and nine miles south-east of Dacca stood Sonārgāon, the capital. It was also strongly fortified, and served as

an important port. Another important post of Mūsā Khān was Jātrāpur, which at that time stood at the confluence of the channel where the Ganges, the Dhaleswari and the Ichhāmati met. It commanded a strategic position of great importance, the Jātrāpur route along the Ichhāmati being the usual water route from Dacca to Rajmahal, the capital of the Bengal subah. After the death of Kedār Ray in 1603, Mūsā Khān seems to have acquired control over the territories of that Hindu Raja, particularly, over the two fortified posts of Sripur and Vikrampur, which we find him defending against the imperial forces in his last campaign. Mūsā Khān was ably supported in his stubborn struggle for independence by his cousin 'Alāul Khān, and his younger brothers Dāud Khān, Abdullah Khān, and Mahmūd Khān (another brother, Ilyās Khān, having submitted to the Mughals after the first defeat of Mūsā Khān). Of his officers, three were noted: one Khwāja Chānd, the minister, the second Hājī Shamsud-dīn Baghdādī, his chief officer, who held charge of his capital, and the third 'Ādil Khān, the admiral of his powerful fleet.

The greatest strength of Musā Khan lay in the 'Twelve Bhuiyās', who were his close associates in his struggle against the Mughals. Though the *Baharistan* repeatedly mentions Musā Khan and the Twelve Bhuiyās, it does not definitely tell us who the Twelve Bhuiyās were. In only one passage it supplies a string of names (Ms. 19 b). In addition to the names of the cousin and younger brothers of Musā Khan, we find the following names :—Bahādur Ghāzi, Sunā Ghāzi, Anwār Ghāzi, Shaikh Pir, son of Hāji Bhakul, Mirzā Mumin, Madhu Rāy (zamindar of Khalsi), Binod Rāy (zamindar of Chāndpratāp), Pahlwān (zamindar of Mātang), and Hāji Shams-ud-din Baghdādi.

Bahādur Ghāzi undoubtedly belonged to the well-known Ghāzi family of Bhawāl, which had originally settled at Chaura, on the western bank of the Lakhiyā, about a mile north of the present Kāliganj. The *Baharistan* frequenty mentions him as the zamindar of Chaura. He possessed a large number of war-boats with which he took a prominent part in Musā Khan's fight against the Mughals, and he tendered submission to the Emperor only after the final defeat of his chief. Later on, he served in the train of the imperialists in their campaigns against Jessore and Kāmrup. Ānwār Ghāzi seems to have belonged to Bahādur Ghāzi's family, and was probably the son of his younger brother, Māhtāb Ghāzi.

Sunā Ghāzi was the zamindar of Sarāil (a well-known pargana on the northern extremity of the Tipperā District), and possessed a large number of war-boats. He does not seem to have taken any noteworthy part in Musā Khan's defensive campaigns, and he

probably took the earliest opportunity of tendering submission to the Mughals. The *Baharistan* depicts him as taking a prominent part in the Mughal campaigns against Khwāja 'Usmān, Rāja Pratāpāditya, and Rāja Parikshit Nārāyan, as also in the numerous campaigns against the rebel elements in Kāmrup, and the Rāja of Assam.

Pahlwān of Mātang was another powerful ally of Musā Khan, ruling a territory named Mātang, north of Sarāil and south of Taraf, probably on the border between the present Districts of Tipperā and Sylhet. The *Baharistan* describes him as the most valiant among the zamindars, and he offered a stubborn defence, fighting the Mughals till his death in the field of battle.

The whole of modern Sylhet was the stronghold of the Afghans, the most important of them being Bāyizid Karrāni, who (with his brother Ya'qub) held sway over the heart of the country. Bāyizid's strength lay in the large number of smaller Afghan chiefs who followed his lead (the 'Sarhangs' of the *Baharistan*), and in the numerous elephants which were the most convenient instruments of fighting in the hilly and forest-clad tracts of Sylhet. Bāyizid was in close association with Khwāja 'Usmān, and, like him, fought strenuously to maintain his independence, submitting to the Mughals only after 'Usmān's fall in battle.

Baniāchang, included in the present Habiganj subdivision occupying the south-western portion of the Sylhet District, was in the possession of Ānwār Khan, whom the *Baharistan* (Ms. p. 43) describes as the chief of the zamindars, in no way less powerful than Musā Khan Masnad-i-'Ala. Ānwār Khan and his brother, Husain Khan, at first made a show of submission to the Mughals, but soon escaped from their custody and organised a dangerous conspiracy against them in alliance with Musā Khan and Khwāja 'Usmān. When this miscarried, they fought hard but were ultimately compelled to surrender after the first defeat of 'Usmān and his flight from Bokāinagar. To the south-east of Baniāchang and north of Mātang, lay the hilly tract of Taraf, which was in the hands of Mumriz, son of 'Usmān, and Malhi, the younger brother of 'Usmān. The capital, Taraf, was a fortified place, and it enabled the Afghans to offer a stubborn opposition to the Mughals.

Khwāja 'Usmān,—son of Isā Khan Lohāni Miān Khel, was probably the most romantic figure in the history of mediaeval Bengal. He proved to be the most valiant and redoubtable champion of Afghan independence, and, as such the most formidable enemy of the Mughal peace in Bengal. Though he did not possess the political authority, territorial strength, and military resources of Musā Khan, 'Usmān seems to have excelled him in personal valour,

dash and vigour, and tenacity of purpose, and, above all, in the love of freedom, all of which combined to inspire and sustain him in his defensive warfare against the expanding Mughal power till his death in the field of battle. Driven out from Orissa, 'Usmān had established himself in the region east of the Brahmaputra in the Mymensingh District, with the city of Bokāinagar as his stronghold; in alliance with 'Isā Khan Masnad-i-'Ala, he had fought more than once with Rāja Mānsingh, and eluded Mughal subjection. He continued his political alliance with 'Isā Khan's son Musā Khan, and proved always eager to attack the Mughals in the course of their campaign against Musā Khan. Usmān maintained friendly relations also with the Afghan chiefs of Sylhet, such as Bāyizid Karrāni, and Ānwār Khan of Baniāchang, and this enabled him to seek shelter in Sylhet after the fall of Bokāinagar, and to create in the hilly tract in the southern part of that district a new centre of authority, with Uhar as the fortified capital, and also to establish his son and brother in the neighbouring tract of Taraf.

The strength of 'Usmān lay in the ungrudging support of his younger brothers, Wali, Malhi, and Ibrahim, and his two sons, Mumriz and Ya'qub, and in his citadel of Bokāinagar, and two other fortified posts, one at Hasanpur, the other at Egārasindur, both on the eastern bank of the Brahmaputra, which was the dividing line between the territories of 'Usmān and the Mughals, and in his large number of war elephants, which enabled him to reduce the Mughal army to great straits in the final battle at Daulambāpur.

III. Independent Rajas beyond the frontier.

Of the kings ruling over the frontier tracts of Mughal Bengal at this time, the first to be mentioned is Lakshmi Nārāyan, Rāja of Kāmtā or Kuch Bihar, which comprised the territory bounded by the Karatoyā on the west and the Sankosh on the east. A long-standing family feud with the neighbouring king of Kāmrup had already led him to seek the help of the Mughal viceroy, Rāja Mān Singh in 1596, and the same trouble made him finally acknowledge the Mughal suzerainty in 1609. From this time till his death he served the Mughals as a faithful vassal.

The next important ruler was Rāja Parikshit Nārāyan of Kāmrup, a new State which had been carved out of the Kuch Bihar kingdom by his father Raghu Dev, during the reign of the Kuch King Nara Nārāyan, the father of Lakshmi Nārāyan. He was the ruler of a large tract of country bounded by the river Sankosh on the west and the Bar Nadi on the east, with Gilah, on the Gadādhar

river, as the favourite royal residence, Baranagar, on the Manas, as the official capital, and Dhubri, on the Brahmaputra, as the main stronghold. He possessed a strong army, a large number of elephants, and a large fleet, with which he fought hard to preserve his independence against the Mughals. He was ultimately defeated and his kingdom annexed to the Mughal Empire.

THE RAJA OF ASSAM: The conquest of Kamrup, followed by its incorporation into the Bengal subah, brought the Mughals, for the first time, into direct and immediate contact with the Ahoms in Assam, thus opening a new and eventful phase in the history of Bengal in relation to the north-eastern frontier, lasting for about three quarters of a century (1612-1682). The reigning Ahom ruler Susengphā (better known as Pratāp Singh, 1603-1641) was strong and capable, and he naturally grew alarmed at the rapid expansion of Mughal sway towards Assam, and gave ungrudging and ample help to all the rebellious elements in Kāmrup, and, particularly, to Bali Nārāyan, brother of king Parikshit Nārāyan of Kāmrup, whom he installed as a vassal ruler in Darrang. The result was that hostilities, often open and undisguised, but mostly secret and indirect, continued between the Mughal Emperor and the Ahom ruler throughout the greater part of the seventeenth century.

The most noted ruler on the north-eastern frontier, bordering on Sylhet, was Raja Shatrudaman of Kāchar. He was a very ambitious and powerful king, who had successfully invaded Jaintiā, and, later on, defeated the Ahom king, celebrating his success by assuming the title of Pratāp Nārāyan and changing the name of his capital from Maibung to Kirtipur. He was naturally alarmed at the Mughal invasion of Sylhet, and sent help to Bāyizid Karrāni. When his turn came, he offered strong resistance from his two strongholds—the hill-fort of 'Asurātekar' and the fort of 'Pratāpgarh', and though compelled to submit for a time, he ultimately freed himself from the Mughal yoke.

The greatest of the border kings was undoubtedly the Rāja of Tipperā, who ruled over an extensive territory, hilly and forest-clad, on the south-eastern frontier of the Bengal province. Both the *Akbarnamah* and the *Baharistan* testify to the large dominion and abundant resources in men and war equipments, particularly elephants, of the ruler of Tipperā.

The Tipperā kings had played a prominent part in the history of Bengal in the sixteenth century. Bijaya Mānikya (*c.* 1540-71 A. D.) mentioned in the *Ain*, was a powerful ruler who recovered Chittagong from the Muslims, and led a daring raid into Eastern Bengal. The name of the capital was changed from Rāngāmāti to 'Udaypur' during the reign of the next ruler, Uday Mānikya

(*c.* 1572-76). Perhaps the greatest and most famous ruler was Amar Mānikya (1577-86), who succeeded in establishing his hegemony over a good portion of south-eastern Bengal by successfully invading Bhuluā, Baklā, Sarāil, Sylhet (Taraf) etc., and offering asylum to 'Isā Khan, the zamindar of Sarāil. Amar Mānikya, however, suffered a severe defeat at the hands of the king of Arakan (Sikandar Shah), who overran Tipperā and even plundered his capital. The downward stage in Tippera history began from the reign of Rājadhar (1586-1600), and reached its nadir in the reign of Yasodhar or Yaso Mānikya, son of Rājadhar, (*c.* 1600-1618), who fell a victim to Mughal aggression, during the viceroyalty of Ibrāhim Khan Fath-jang, when his fortified capital Udaypur (about 19 miles due east of Comillā town), was taken and made the seat of a Mughal *thānah.*

South of Tipperā lay the territory of the Raja of Arakan (invariably termed ' Rakhang ' in the *Baharistan* and the *Fathiyya*). Its rulers took advantage of the internal troubles and political complications following Akbar's nominal conquest of Bengal to extend their authority over a large portion of south-eastern Bengal. The Arakan king Meng Phalaung (Sikandar Shah, 1571-1593) brought the whole of Chittagong under his sway, and also occupied a large portion of Noākhāli and Tipperā. His son, Meng Radzagui (Salim Shah, 1593-1612), was equally capable and ambitious, but Meng Radzagui's son, Meng Khamaung (Husain Shah, 1612-1622), proved to be the greatest and most successful conqueror, and the father and the son, between them led a number of campaigns against Bengal, and, by their policy of open war and secret help to the rebel elements, proved to be a serious menace to the Mughal peace in the country.[1]

Another, and a far more troublesome element, had already appeared in Bengal. It was the Portuguese sea-rovers, a race of very competent seamen, commonly known as the Feringi pirates. They were not lawful subjects of the king of Portugal and owed no allegiance to the Portuguese viceroy at Goa. Nor did they fully submit themselves to the authority of the Arakan king, though they had two strong settlements in his domain, one at Dianga, 20 miles south of Chittagong town, south of the mouth of the Karnafuli river, and the other further south, on the Arakan coast, at Syriam, now a noted

[1] The *Baharistan*, the *Fathiya* Continuation, and Bernier's *Travels* all testify to the spacious country, political pre-eminence, great splendour and large forces of the Arakan kings (termed as the Magh Raja). According to the *Baharistan*, the Arakan king possessed one million infantry, fifteen hundred elephants and ten thousand war-boats, while the *Fathiya* says—' their cannon are beyond numbering, their flotilla exceeds the waves of the sea (in number).'

port in Burma. They often fought under the banner of the Magh Raja, principally against the Mughals in Bengal. A few Portuguese adventurers also entered the services of some of the Bengal zamindars like Chānd Ray and Kedār Ray of Sripur and Vikrampur and Pratāpāditya of Jessore, and figured prominently in their warfare.

Chittagong, the hilly tract lying midway between Bengal on the northwest and Arakan on the south, was the greatest stronghold of these Feringi pirates, and, from Chittagong, they constantly led plundering raids into the coastal territories of southern and eastern Bengal, ranging from Hughly, Jessore, Bhushnā, and Baklā, to Vikrampur, Sonārgāon, and even Dacca, passing first by the island of Sondip on the left and Bhuluā on the right; their earliest raid in Akbar's reign occurred in the spring of the year 1603 (*Akbarnamah*, III, 1231-32).

The Feringi pirates of Dianga and Syriam were often involved in quarrels with their political overlord, the king of Arakan, and one such quarrel culminated in a general massacre of the colonists at Dianga in 1607 A. D. Sebastian Gonzales, one of the few Portuguese who escaped from that massacre, captured the island of Sondip in 1609, and setting himself up as an independent ruler, carried on plundering raids into the coast tracts of Backerganj. About 1611, he treacherously murdered the younger brother of the Arakan king who had sought shelter with him, and seized his family and treasures. Later on, he sent his brother, Antonio Carvalho, to join the Arakan king in a raid into Bengal in the year 1614. In short, Gonzales played a prominent part in the history of Bengal for more than a decade in Jahāngir's reign (1607-17).

The Portuguese freebooters carried on their depredations into Bengal in close alliance with the local people of Chittagong, commonly known as the Maghs, who were a race of equally competent seamen, equally cruel and adventurous, and living a similar piratical life. The quaint features, manners, and customs of these half civilised Mongoloid hordes, the frequency, severity, and ruthlessness of their raids, the serious damage and desolation caused by them, and their harsh and brutal treatment of their captives, all combined to make the Maghs an object of great hatred and terror to the imperial officers and people of Bengal, as is testified to by the author of the *Fathiya* (Continuation) and the European traveller Bernier. The desolation caused by the Maghs is especially emphasised in the *Fathiya* :—

> " The Maghs did not leave a bird in the air or a beast on the land (from Chatgaon) to Jogdiā, the frontier of Bengal. . . . Not a householder was left on both the sides of the rivers on their track from Dacca to Chatgaon ".

VI. Difficulties of the Mughal position.

From the above review of the political condition of Bengal, it would appear that the situation had by no means improved since the death of Akbar. Ma'sum Khan Kābuli (died in May, 1599), 'Isā Khan Masnad-i-'Ala (died in Sept, 1599), and Kedār Rāy of Sripur and Vikrampur (died in March, 1603), the three redoubtable enemies of the Mughal peace had no doubt disappeared from the political arena, but other persons were not wanting to step into their places. The mantle of 'Isā Khan had fallen on his son Musā Khan, who inherited his father's ability, ambition, and military talents, though not his ripe judgement, cautiousness, prudence, and foresight (qualities applauded even by Abul Fazl.) He and his Twelve Bhuiyās proved to be a greater source of trouble to the Mughal government than 'Isā Khan. This explains why Musā Khan stood foremost in the Mughal imperialist programme and why he was the first to be subdued and disarmed. The inroads of the Arakan king and, particularly those of his proteges, the Feringi and Magh pirates, had only begun in the reign of Akbar, and they grew more serious, more frequent, and more penetrating during the reign of Jahāngir, mainly because of the fact that the territories of Jessore, Baklā, Bhuluā, Sripur, and Vikrampur, which had served so long as buffer States, were gradually merged in the Bengal subah, and the two parties came into more direct relations than before.

The task of conquest and consolidation was rendered more complicated owing to insuperable difficulties arising out of the nature of the country and its peculiar geography. The peculiar physical configuration of East Bengal, its numerous rivers, streams, *nālāhs*, creeks, and swamps, its damp and moist air, and its prolonged rains for at least half the year, its peculiar vegetation—absence of barley and wheat, its no less peculiar language, foreign to Urdu and Hindi alike,—all these made the Mughal grandees intensely dislike service in Benagal.

The adverse influence of physical features was more directly felt in the conducting of military operations. The cavalry, hitherto the mainstay of the Mughal army, proved practically useless in traversing the numerous rivers and streams, of south-eastern Bengal, and foot soldiers (*pāiks* as they were popularly termed) so useful for the riparian tracts, were difficult to recruit by the alien conquerors. Reinforcements from the Central government also were no less difficult to obtain in the distant eastern province, and the Mughal commanders had to rely mainly on the local levies with a natural leaning towards the old zamindars. Above all, the Mughals were weak in war-boats, the only effective instrument of war in Bengal—

and weaker still in trained sailors, and they had to depend on the war-boats of their allies and vassal zamindars, who did not prove too loyal. The time for campaigning also was strictly limited to the winter and spring months—roughly November to April—no warfare being possible during the prolonged rains, lasting practically from May to October, when the rivers were in flood and turned the whole country into a vast sheet of water.

These difficulties mainly explain the slow progress of the Mughal arms in Bengal, in sharp contrast with the rapid successes achieved by them in other parts of India. The Bengal zamindars also delayed the work of conquest by avoiding open and decisive engagements as far as possible, and taking to guerilla warfare or making frequent surprise attacks with their war-boats at night. But, happily for the Emperor the Bengal chiefs failed to offer a united and organised opposition (the case of Musā Khān and his associates being the only exception) to the Mughals and so they went down singly and separately. The absence of the spirit of nationality, the bitter feeling of rivalry, jealousy, and hostility amongst the zamindars on the one side, and the skilful separatist or 'divide and rule' policy initiated by the Mughal viceroys on the other side, account for this political tragedy.

VII. Three short uneventful viceroyalties, 1605-1608.

The Mughal Emperor Jahāngir ascended the throne on October, 24, 1605. The history of Bengal under the first three viceroys of Jahāngir, covering roughly a period of about two years and a half, was uneventful.

Rāja Mān Singh (1605-1606)—who had rendered such distinguished services to Bengal during the rule of Akbar, was reappointed governor of Bengal by Jahāngir immediately after his accession. But the Emperor took the earliest opportunity of removing him and sending out to Bengal an officer of his own choice (*c.* Sept, 1606).

Qutb-ud-din Khan Kokah (1606-07)—The next governor of Bengal who had an equally brief rule (*c.* Sept, 1606—May, 1607) was Qutb-ud-din Khan Kokah, the foster-brother of Jahāngir. But he was soon killed in the course of a conflict with Sher-afkan, the rebellious Turki faujdār of Burdwan (30th May, 1607).

Jahāngir Quli Khan (1607-08)—On the death of Qutb-ud-din Khan Kokah, Jahāngir Quli Khan governor of Bihār, was appointed governor of Bengal. He was originally a slave, but he steadily rose to high office owing to his natural ability. He was fairly old and could not stand the climate of the province, but died within a year of his assumption of office. The news of his death reached the Emperor on 6th May, 1608.

CHAPTER XIV

CONQUESTS OF ISLĀM KHAN, 1608-1613.

I. Islām Khan's preparations and plans

Shaikh 'Ala-ud-din, entitled Islām Khan, the grandson of the famous saint Shaikh Salim Chishti, was appointed governor of Bengal as soon as the report of the death of Jahāngir Quli Khan reached Jahāngir. He had grown up with the Emperor since his childhood, was about the same age, and was especially honoured with the title of son.

Though young and without much experience, the new governor possessed certain traits of character wich fitted him pre-eminently for his office. He was personally brave and temperate in his habits, and showed great vigour, resoluteness, and sincere devotion to duty. His tenacity of purpose, coolness of judgement, and resourcefulness in moments of crisis, were particularly laudable. What characterised Islām Khan most was his imperious manners, autocratic bearing, and overpowering ambition. He made a firm resolve to put down the Bengal zamindars and impose Mughal authority over the whole province ; and, during his five years' rule, succeeded in realising this aim in a remarkable degree. Uninterrupted success only added to his natural insolence and haughtiness. and he gave himself royal airs and often defied even the orders of the Emperor.[1]

[1] Tuzuk R & B. I. 82-83, 142, 208), Iqbalnamah, 24, *History Jahangir*, 105 106, 152, 201, 207.

The details of the Mughal campaigns in Bengal are available in the contemporary narrative of Mirzā Nathan, named the *Bahāristān-i-Ghaibi,* which deals exclusively with the history of Bengal. It greatly supplements the meagre account of the activities of Islām Khan and of his successors previously available in the official chronicles of Jahāngir's reign, particularly, the *Tuzuk* and the *Iqbalnamāh,* and throws much light on the administration, court life, and the social and economic condition of Mughal Bengal. It is mainly because of the abundance of material and minute details available in the *Baharistan,* that the history of Bengal during the age of Jahāngir attains a fullness, unity, continuity, and interest, unknown before.

The *Baharistan* is divided into four *daftars* or books, the first of which deals with the events of Islām Khan's viceroyalty, and has been named, after the governor, the *Islāmnāmah;* the second treats of the viceroyalty of Qāsim Khan, the third that of Ibrāhim Khan Fath-jang (titled *Ibrāhimnāmah*), while the fourth treats of the usurpation of the Bengal government by the rebel prince Shāh Jahān (named *Wāqiat-i-Jahān Shāh* or the Chronicles of Shah Jahan).

From Bihar, the new governor proceeded to Rājmahal, and assumed charge of his office early in June, 1608. All the incompetent and dishonest officers were sent away, and the Afghan chiefs of doubtful loyalty, such as, the sons of Ma'sum Khan Kābuli, and Lachin Khan Qāqshāl (the Qāqshāls of Ghorāghāt being noted for their disaffection and disloyalty since the time of Akbar) were sent away to court. Attempts were also made to recover the forces and war-equipments, particularly, the guns, heavy artillery, and war-boats, that had been removed from the province by the previous viceroys.

At Rājmahal, Islām Khan awaited the arrival of the new diwān, and particularly, of the new admiral (*mirbahr*), Ihtimām Khan, who proceeded slowly down the Ganges and joined Islām Khan only at the end of the rains. During the stay of Islām Khan at Rājmahal, two important events occurred. The first was a surprise attack on the imperial thānah of Ālapsingh (the seat of a big pargana along the right bank of the Brahmaputra in Mymensingh, in Rennell's *Bengal Atlas*, No. VI) by Kwāja 'Usmān of Bokāinagar who, captured it and killed the unsuspecting thānahdār Sazāwal Khan Niyāzi, and occupied the entire region. Islām Khan took prompt action. He sent a strong force under the command of his brother Shaikh Ghiyāsuddin, (later created 'Ināyet Khan), and recovered the thānah.

The other event was the submission of Raja Pratāpāditya of Jessore, who sent his envoy Shaikh Badi and his youngest son Sangrāmāditya with suitable gifts to the governor. The prince was left behind as a hostage on the agreement that Pratāpāditya would personally attend on the Bengal governor at Ālāipur with sufficient war equipments and aid him in his war with Musā Khan[1]. At Rājmahal Islām Khan settled his political programme as well as his plan of military operations. He realised that his foremost enemy was Musā Khan, the acknowledged leader of the Twelve Bhuiyās and that these lesser chiefs would never submit so long as their leader was not finally disarmed. From Rājmahal to Sonārgāon, the

[1] This is the earliest mention of Pratāpāditya in Mughal history—the *Akbarnamah*, the *Ain-i-Akbari*, the *Tuzuk*, all maintaining complete silence about him. The fanciful achievements of Pratāpāditya, and the halo of romance, valour, and glory that gathered round him as a great national hero, and the confusion regarding his career, particularly, his fall from power, have been fairly cleared by Sir Jadunath Sarkar (articles in Bengali in *Prabasi* 1326, 1327, 1328) and Dr. N. K. Bhattashali (*Bengal Chiefs' Struggle*, in *Bengal, Past & Present*, 1928), and need not be repeated here. It may noted in passing that Professor Satish Chandra Mitra's treatment of Pratapaditya (*History of Jessore and Khulna*, B. S. 1328) has been too sympathetic and biassed.

capital of Musā Khan, was a far cry, and the way lay through the territories of hostile zamindars, who must either be subdued by force or cajoled into submission, The necessity of maintaining communication with the headquarters. protection of the rear and flank against surprise attack, and of the establishment of safe and convenient bases for encampment, particularly, in the rains, during the long and tedious journey through the heart of Bengal, made almost continuous compaigning inevitable. Judged from this standpoint, the numerous expeditions sent out by Islām Khan in the course of his advance from Rājmahal towards Dacca seem to be not haphazard raids, but regular and systematic campaigns, well planned and well-executed, with due regard to time, place and circumstances.

When the rains ended, Islām Khan started for the Bhāti region, with a large army and an adequate fleet which numbered 295, including 70 transport boats at Rājmahal, and then marched cautiously on land closely followed by the artillery and war-boats in charge of the admiral Ihtimām Khan. At Tituliā. in the Māldah District Ihtimām Khan got disquieting news from the revenue-collector of the pargana of Chilā Juwār (forming part of the pargana of Bhāturiābāzu, stretching over the Pābna and Rajshahi Districts) that the neighbouring pargana of Sonābāzu, (both the parganas being, among others, granted to Ihtimām Khan as jāgir.) had been seized, the local agents killed, and Chātmahar (19 miles north of Pābna town), the seat of the agents captured by three zamindars who had so long been holding sway over that pargana—Mirzā Mumin, Dariyā Khan, and Madhu Ray. Ihtimām Khan at first sent a small force of his own against the rebels, but when this proved ineffective, he appealed for help to Islām Khan.

As soon as Ihtimām Khan joined Islām Khan at Tipurā, the latter marched forward and encamped at a place in the pargana of Gaur (Māldah), whence he sent a force of 2000 cavalry and 4000 musketeers, under the command of Shaikh Kamāl, to subdue Bir Hamir, Shams Khan, and Salim Khan, the zamindars of Birbhum. Pachet, and Hijli respectively. Bir Hamir not only submitted without resistance but led the Mughal commander into the territory of his neighbour, Shams Khan of Pachet, and tried to persuade him to follow suit. Shams Khan, however, fought hard for a fortnight, but was at last forced to submit when the Mughals occupied the skirts of the Darni hill and threatened to storm his fortified post on its top. Next came the turn of Salim Khan, who accepted the imperial vassalage without fighting.

Islām Khan continued his march till he reached the pargana of Goāsh in Naurangābād (Goās in Rennell's *Bengal Atlas,* VI, stands south of the Ganges, midway between the towns of Murshidabad

and Jellinghy in the Murshidabad District), on the bank of the Ganges, early in January, 1609. Marching by way of Goāsh, Islām Khan crossed the Ganges (Padmā) and reached Ālāipur (on the Ganges, 12 miles south-east of Putiā in Rajshahi), Ihtimām Khan, with the fleet, joining him afterwards. The Bengal governor encamped at Ālāipur and halted there for about two months.

During this long stay a strong force was despatched under the command of Iftikhār Khan against Rāja Satrajit, zamindar of Bhushnā. His father Mukunda had treacherously murdered the sons of Murād Khan (*Akbarnamah*, III, 469), and had, for a time, extended his sway over Fathabad. Mukunda appears to have tendered a nominal submissoin when Rāja Mān Singh sent a force against him under his son Himmat Singh (*Akbarnamah*, III, 1023), and continued to exercise independent power, with Bhushnā for his capital, which was strongly fortified. Satrajit apparently had to give up his hold on Fathabad, but he kept his authority intact over Bhushnā, and determined to offer a tough resistance. At the approach of the invading army, he gathered a strong force, proceeded to the bank of the Ātā Khāl (at present known as Māluār Khāl, branching off from the Chitrā river and falling into the Bhairab, about a mile east of the subdivisional town of Nārāil, in District Jessore), and built a strong fort thereon, and attempted to prevent the crossing of that Khāl by the enemy. But when the Mughal force, with the help of spies, succeeded in crossing the Khāl by a convenient ford, the Raja submitted to the Mughal commander. Iftikhār Khan and was enlisted by Islām Khan in the imperial service, with the restoration of his lands.

At Ālāipur the zamindars of Birbhum, Pachet, and Hijli, arrived in the company of Shaikh Kamāl, and tendered personal submission to Islām Khan, who, dealt with them very leniently, allowed them to hold their own territories as jāgirs, and exempted them from personal service.[1]

[1] According to Abdul Latif, *Prabasi*, p. 553, this event took place not at Alaipur but at Rana Tandapur. Abdul Latif also confuses the names of the zamindars, making Indra Narayan zamindar of Pachet, and omitting the name of the zamindar of Birbhum altogether. Dr. Borah (*Baharistan*, II, 800-01) quoting approvingly Abdul Latif, and, relying on what appears to be a mistaken reference of Mirza Nathan, makes Bir Hamir zamindar of Pachet, and Shams Khan, zamindar of Hijli. According to local chronicles and traditions, Bir Hamir was a well-known figure in Bankura and Vishnupur, and there need not be any doubt or confusion about his seat of power. Mirza Nathan definitely names the zamindars and their territories in his headlines of *Dāstān* four, and though he does not repeat the same in the course of his actual narrative of the invasion, his description, particularly, regarding the order of attack, leaves little doubt as to the individual zamindars and their territories,—first the

II. Halts at Ālāipur and Ghorāghāt; first military and diplomatic moves.

From Ālāipur Islām Khan in response to the appeals for help from Ihtimām Khan for recovering the jagir pargana of Sonābāzu from the hands of the rebel zamindars, sent Mirzā Nathan with an adequate force to deal with the situation. The latter first marched to Chilā and then proceeded towards Chātmahar, which he recovered without any figting, the enemy having already vacated it for a more convenient base near the confluence of the river Ātrāi and the Karatoyā. Thinking it unsafe to stay at Chātmahar, Mirzā Nathan proceeded towards the southwest and encamped at Shahpur (Rennell's *Bengal Atlas,* VI, shows Shawpur, about 10 miles south-west of Pabna town), on the bank of the Ātrāi, made three forts, and waited for further reinforcements from Islām Khan. The latter sent Iftikhār Khan and Rāja Satrajit with a second force to make a joint effort to dislodge the enemy from the new stronghold near Ekdanta (on the bank of the Ichhāmati, 7 miles north-east of Pābnā town). The reinforcing troops first marched from Ālāipur to Nāzirpur (a pargana in the Faridpur thanah of the Pābnā District)[1] and thence proceeded to Ekdantā where Mirzā Nathan soon joined them from Shāhpur. The imperialists, however, found that the enemy had already given up the new stronghold as well, and sought shelter with Musā Khan at Sonārgāon.

On the bank of the Ātrāi, opposite the thānah of Shāhpur, Raja Pratāpāditya came to tender personal submission to Islām Khan. It was arranged that immediately after his return to his kingdom, Pratāpāditya should send 400 war-boats with his youngest son Sangrāmāditya to join the imperial fleet under Ihtimām Khan, and that he himself should, at the end of the rains, proceed along the river Āriālkhan (in Faridpur District), with 20,000 pāiks, 1000 cavalry, and 100 war-boats, to attack Musā Khān's prossessions in

territory of Bir Hamir was attacked—next that of Shams Khan (Pachet with its hills and hill fort), next that of Salim Khan It is easy to note that geographically, Birbhum comes first, then the hilly tract of Pachet to its southwest, and lastly Hijli, to the south-east of Pachet.

[1] Some confusion based obviously on Abdul Latif's casual remarks, gathered regarding the location of this place. (see *Prabasi*, Bhadra, 1329, p. 639 foot note: Dr. Borah, II, 803). The text of the *Baharistan* shows that Nāzirpur was situated in a central position, very close to Ālāipur on the one side, and Chilā, Chātmahar, Ekdantā, and Shāhpur on the other side, and this can only be some place in the Nāzirpur pargana of the Pābna District. According to the *Akbarnamah* II, 1240. Raja Mān Singh in May 1604, spent the rains at Nāzipur, 'which was a choice spot, and centrally situated in Bengal'.

Sripur and Vikrampur (on the east), at the same time that Islām Khan would march (from the west) towards the Bhāti region from Ghorāghāt.

At the approach of the rains, Islām Khan had to make necessary arrangements for holding the territories already subjugated and for maintaining his army and the fleet. He himself, with the land forces, proceeded to Ghorāghāt, which was reached on the 2nd June, 1609. A large number of thatched huts were constructed in which the governor with his forces lived during the rains.

Inspite of all precautions, some of the Mughal officers were reduced to great straits in their jagirs by the local zamindars. Tuqmāq Khan, who had withdrawn from the thānah of Ālapsingh to his jagir in Shāhzādpur on the bank of the Karatoyā, about 20 miles east of Chatmahar and about 26 miles north-east of Pābnā town) was suddenly attacked by the local zamindar Rāja Rāy with a large number of war-boats and closely besieged in the fort of Shāhzādpur for three days, but he drove away the enemy. Another officer, Mirak Bahādur Jala'ir, had to face a more severe and organized attack on his jagir of Chāndpratāp (a big pargana stretching over both banks of the Dhaleswari in the northern part of the Mānikganj subdivision of the Dacca District) made by the local zamindar, Binod Ray, a close follower of Musā Khan, aided by three other petty chiefs Mirza Mumin, Dariyā Khan, and Madhu Ray (all of whom, on being dislodged from the pargana of Sonābāzu, had taken shelter with their leader at Sonārgāon). The rebel zamindars, with a large force of cavalry, infantry, and a large number of war-boats, fell upon the fort of Chāndpratāp. Reinforcements coming from Shāhzādpur, forced the zamindars to hastily withdraw. (*Baharistan*, 10b-11a).

There was a long-standing hostility between the two branches of the Kuch royal house, Lakshmi Nārāyan the Rāja of Kuch Bihar and his nephew Parikshit Nārāyan the Rāja of Kāmrup (called by the Mughals Kuch Hajo). The former now sent as his envoy to Islām Khan, Rāja Raghunāth of Shushang (who had already accepted vassalage,) and stated that he would gladly help in the Mughal conquest of Kāmrup by attacking it from his side. Islām Khan at once despatched a large force under the command of 'Abdu-l-Wāhid against Kāmrup; but that worthless general was easily defeated by Parikshit Nārāyan. From Ghorāghāt Islām Khan sent a force under his brother, Shaikh Habibullah, against Majlis Qutb, zamindar of Fathābād (Faridpur), who was a powerful ally of Musā Khan. He directed Raja Satrajit to aid the imperial army by making a simultaneous attack on Fathābād from the side

of Bhushnā. The imperial force, proceeding southwards along the Karatoyā laid siege to the fortified capital city of Fathābād. In great distress, Majlis Qutb appealed for help to Musā Khan, who readily responded, and sent Mirzā Mumin, with a large force and 200 war-boats, to his relief. A tough fight followed. Mirzā Mumin made three daring attempts to capture the fortified post of Habibullah, and, particularly, that of Raja Satrajit (across the river Māthābhāngā, near its confluence with the Āriāl Khān), but was finally repulsed and compelled to flee across the Ganges (Padmā) to Musā Khan.

III. Campaigns against Musā Khan and the Rāja of Bhuluā.

About the end of October, 1609, Islām Khan struck his camp at Ghorāghāt and marched southwards along the Karatoyā to Shāhzādpur, whence he proceeded to Balia[1]. Here he settled the details of his campaign against Musā Khan. He himself, with the main army and the fleet, would attack Musā Khan, moving by the Jātrāpur route from the west, while an advance force was to be sent straight towards the imperial thānah of Dacca, situated close to Musā Khan's capital and other fortified posts, so as to distract the attention of Musā Khan and weaken his defence by compelling him to fight on two fronts at the same time. So Shaikh Kamāl, Tuqmāq Khan, and Mirak Bahādur Jalā'ir (the last two possessing intimate knowledge of local conditions) were sent to Dacca with 20 war-boats, 2,000 musketeers, 50 pieces of artillery, 100 maunds of gun powder, and 100 maunds of lead etc., with instructions to repair the old fortifications and build a new fort, and get ready for war. They reached Dacca in six marches and finished their work.

From Balia Islām Khan marched in two stages to a strategic point near the confluence of the three rivers, the Ganges (Padmā), the Ichhāmati, and the Dhaleswari, which the *Baharistan* calls 'the mouth of Katasgarh' and which may be roughly identified with the great confluence of rivers at Jafarganj, (Rennell's *Bengal Atlas*, XVI), and entrenched on the bank of the Padmā. Ihtimām Khan with the fleet and the artillery closely followed him, after making three forts at a similar strategic place in the vicinity—' Trimohani Khāl

[1] This has been identified with Bowleah (Rennell's *Bengal Atlas*, VI) six miles south-west of Shahzadpur. From the context, this identification does not seem to be satisfactory (see Borah, II, 811) and it appears that Boaleea (Survey of India, 1"—4 miles Map, sheet No. 78 H), about 10 miles south-east of Shahzadpur, is probably the place meant.

Jogini' (probably represented by the confluence near Singrāsan, Rennell's *Bengal Atlas,* XVI).

The immediate objective of the imperialists was the capture of the almost impregnable stronghold of Musā Khan, situated on the Ichhāmati, 'upon the entry of the great channel' (of the Ganges the Ichhamāti, and the Dhaleswari) at Jātrāpur[1] (about 25 miles west of Dacca), a little down the imperial entrenchments at Katasgarh.

Islām Khan decided to advance with the land army from Katasgarh towards the enemy fort by making block-houses all along the route, while the fleet was to move down the Ichhāmati under cover of these block-houses and the protection of the land army, and make a combined assault on Jātrāpur.

Musā Khan had sent three of his ablest lieutenants, Mirzā Mumin, Dariyā Khan, and Madhu Rāy, to defend the fort of Jātrāpur. Mirzā Mumin continued to hold it along with Madhu Ray. Hearing that Dariyā Khan had been murdered by Mumin, Musā Khan, with his faithful vassals,[2] 700 war-boats, hastened (along the Ichhāmati) to meet the enemy, and launched an immediate attack on the imperialist entrenchments at Katasgarh.

At the end of a day's fight, Musā Khan thought it necessary to strengthen his position by making a big fort at a strategic point on the bank of the Padmā, not far from the enemy camp, named Dākcharā *(Dhakjera,* three miles northwest of Jātrāpur, is probably meant). In one night, a high mud fort was raised with a deep moat around, and with bamboo spikes fixed into the ground all round the moat, from which next morning, Musā Khan resumed his assault on the imperialists with renewed vigour. In the beginning, Musā Khan's artillery wrought great havoc on the imperialists. Islām Khan was then taking his meal; the first shot destroyed all the utensils and the crockery, and killed 20 to 30 of his table-boys, while the second one struck his standard-bearer. The imperialists soon rallied, and began a vigorous counter-attack, killing among others

1 Jatrapur in Van den Brouck's Map, 1660, and in Tavernier's *Travels,* is located near the confluence of the three great channels, unlike its position pretty far to the east in Rennell's *Bengal Atlas,* XVI. See N. K. B. in *Bengal P & P*, Vol. LI. Part 1-54-59.

2 The zamindars named (*Baharistan*-19b) are:—'Alau-l-Khan (cousin of Musā Khan), 'Abdullah Khan and Mahmud Khan (younger brothers of Musā Khan), Bahādur Ghāzi (of Chaurā), Sunā Ghāzi (zamindar of Sarāil), Anwār Ghāzi (zamindar of Baniāchang, Sylhet), Shaikh Pir, son of Hāji Bhakul (unidentified), Mirzā Mumin, Madhu Rāy of Khalsi. Binod Rāy of Chāndpratāp. Pahlwān, zamindar of Matang, and Hāji Shams-ud-din Baghdādi (chief officer of Musā Khan).

a son of Madhu Rāy and a brother of Binod Rāy and wounding a good many men on the enemy's war-boats, and sinking a few of them. Next morning the fighting was more severe and long-continued and proved more decisive. Madhu Rāy and Binod Rāy fought desperately. Repeated attempts were made to break into the imperialist entrenchments and a severe hand to hand fight ensued. At the time of the third assault, the imperialists gained the upper hand with the result that a large number of the enemy were either drowned or trampled to death by the war elephants. Musā Khan was forced to withdraw to his strongholds of Dākcharā and Jātrāpur.

Islām Khan's next move, to take Dākcharā by assault, failed, and so a naval attack was planned by digging a dried-up canal near the imperial entrenchments. Musā Khan, at this stage, made overtures for peace, obviously for the purpose of gaining time in order to make better preparations for war. He visited Islām Khan's camp and carried on negotiations for three days. The peace move soon broke down as Islām Khan saw through the designs of Musā Khan and did not take him seriously.

Islām Khan now seems to have changed his plan of war, and made a night attack on Jātrāpur while holding Musā Khan in play at Dākcharā. This sudden attack was completely successful. In obedience to the orders of Islām Khan, Shaikh Kamāl remained in charge of the fortified thānah of Dacca, and sent Tuqmāq Khan to guard the mouth of the Kudāliyā (identification doubtful. Is it *Kudaliya,* 2½ miles S. W of Nārāyanganj, or *Char Kudaliya,* on the northern bank of the Dhaleswari, north of Pātharghātā and south of Dacca ?) At the same time the commandant at Dacca sent Mirak Bahādur with 20 war boats to the mouth of the Kuthāruiyā, (apparently the confluence of the Kuthāruiyā, with the Ichhamati, Kuthāruiyā being the old name of the Kirtināshā, or that portion of the Padmā which passes through Vikrampur and joins the Meghnā.) Islām Khan reached this last position in the last watch of the night from Katasgarh. The imperial forces began to cross the Ichhāmati forthwith. When only a small portion of them had crossed over, Musā Khan received the news and rushed to the scene, but only to find that the whole Mughal army had safely landed and already launched a vigorous assault on the fort of Jātrāpur. After some fighting Musā Khan evacuated the fort, which was promptly occupied by the victors, (c. early in June, 1610).

Islām Khan now concentrated all his energies on the capture of the fort of Dākcharā. Its conquest, however, proved to be a very formidable task, and the operations dragged on for a considerable time, because of the strong natural defences of the fort and the

desparate resistance offered by the enemy. Musā Khan first tried hard but unsuccessfully to prevent the passage of the imperial war-boats at night through a newly made canal, and a serious fight followed, resulting in heavy losses on both sides. But the imperial fleet forced its way at midnight to the Ichhāmati (c. 9th June, 1610). Islām Khan had to face greater difficulties and suffer heavier losses in the course of his operations for the actual capture of Musā Khan's stronghold. The guns from its turrets poured forth unremitting fire, while the artillery in the Bengali war-boats on the river Padmā proved equally effective. At last a highly concentrated effort was made to enter the fort from the most vulnerable side where the mud and mire was least thick, and the infantry began to move forward under cover of their shields, but a large number of men were killed. For the greater protection of the troops, the wagons (*gardunhā*) which used to be arranged as a sort of moving bridge on the war-boats at the time of reviews of the fleet, were then brought down by Mirzā Nathan and used as the back support of an artificial barrier made of heaps of straw mixed with mud, under cover of which further advance was made with smaller losses.

In this way the environs of the fort-wall were reached. But how to get across the deep moat, bristling along its edge with fixed bamboo spikes? Another experiment was made and with better results. 10,000 boatmen were ordered at night, in two groups, to bring 5000 bundles of straw and 5000 basketfuls of earth and deposit them first all round the bamboo spikes so as to completely cover them up, and then use them to fill up the surrounding moat, thus providing an easy passage for men and elephants. The boat-men, under the inspiration of Mirzā Nathan, finished their work by midnight, and the imperialists just before dawn broke down the rampart and entered the fort of Dākcharā after a siege of more than a month (c. 15th July, 1610).

The conquest of Jātrāpur and Dākcharā ended the first stage of Islām Khan's campaign. The fall of the two fortresses was a heavy blow to Musā Khan. His losses in men and war-boats were great, but greater still was his loss of confidence, prestige and authority. His hold on the confederacy of the Bhuiyās was shaken, a tangible proof of which was the desertion of his own brother Ilyās Khan.

Isālm Khan's next step was to march to Dacca for attacking the centre of Musā Khan's power and his capital Sonārgāon. By way of Kuthāruiyā, Baliā (24 miles west of Dacca) and Kālākupā (on the Ichhāmati, one mile north of Nawābganj), he reached Pātharghātā (on the south bank of the Dhaleswari, about six miles south of Dacca) with the entire land army, while the fleet transporting

the artillery, under Ihtimām Khan, moved between the two wings of the land forces. The viceroy reached Dacca (c. the end of July 1610.)

At Dacca, Islām Khan made fresh postings of officers to the strategic points around for their protection during the rains. He himself took up his quarters within the fort of Dacca (obviously the new one built by Shaikh Kamāl and Mirak Bahādur in advance of his entry into the city), and stationed Ihtimām Khan and his son Mirzā Nathan at two fortified posts in the city on either side of the point where the river Dulāi, on which Dacca stood, bifurcated, one branch running into the Lakhiyā through Demrā (4 miles north of Narayanganj), and the other joining the same river near Khizrpur one mile north of Narayanganj).[1] Islām Khan sent Mirak Bahādur and other officers to Sripur, and Bāyizid Khan to Vikrampur.

Musā Khan made ample preparations for his second fight. Leaving his capital in charge of his chief officer, Hāji Shams-ud-dīn Baghdādi, he came out to fight, making the Lakhiyā, which was at that time a large river, more than a mile in breadth with strong currents, his main line of defence. He took post at a central strategic point at the mouth of the Bandar Canal, which flowing by his capital joined the Lakhiyā opposite Narayanganj, (at present the Tribeni Khāl runs from the pargana of Sonārgaon into the Lakhiyā near Bandar opposite Narayanganj). Throwing up two earthwork forts on each side of the canal, Musā (supported by Mirzā Mumin in the rear) held one while his cousin 'Ala-ul Khan guarded the other. Of his brothers, 'Abdullah Khan was placed in charge of the fortified post at Qadam Rasul, opposite Narayanganj, Dāud Khan in charge of Kātrābhu, their family residence north of Qadam Rasul, Mahmud Khan in charge of another post at the point where the Dulāi joined the Lakhiyā at Demrā four miles above Narayanganj, while Bahādur Ghāzi, another trusty zamindar, was stationed with 200 war-boats further up the Lakhiyā, near his ancestral residence Chaurā one mile north of modern Kāliganj. Only a few outposts were retained at Sripur and Vikrampur, and the majority of the Bengal forces were concentrated on the several strategic posts on the left bank of the river. It appears that

[1] It should here be noted that the river Burigangā is never mentioned by Mirza Nathan and the river on which Dacca stands, is always named as the Dulāi. Further, the Dulāi in those days joined the Lakhiyā directly at Khizrpur, and the present Dhaleswari mouth of the river Burigangā did not then exist, as will be seen in Van den Broucke's Map of 1660. See N. K. B. (B. P & P. Vol. LI, Part I. 50-55).

Khizrpur, at the confluence of the Dulāi with the Lakhiyā, lying on the right bank. was voluntarily evacuated by Musā Khan.

In the disposition of his forces, Islām Khan strictly confined himself to the right bank of the Lakhiyā, while Musā Khan held the left bank only. Khizrpur, on account of its strategic position as commanding the two enemy strongholds of Kātrābhu and Qadam Rasul was strongly fortified, and was first entrusted to Mirzā Nathan, and then to his father, Ihtimām Khan, and made the base of the imperial war-boats and artillery, the war-boats being stationed at a safe place in the narrow waters of the Dulāi. Just to the north of Khizrpur, a post was made opposite the enemy fort of Kātrābhu in charge of Dāud Khan and placed under the command of Mirzā Nathan. Shaikh Rukn was stationed further up the Lakhiyā at Demrā opposite Mahmud Khan's post, and Shaikh 'Abdul Wāhid higher up at Chaurā facing Bahādur Ghāzi's fort. Towards the south, Shaikh Kamāl was stationed at Kumārsar, 1½ miles south of Narayanganj (Coblenesser of Rennell's *Bengal Atlas*, XII), and further south, Tuqmāq Khan was sent to his old post near the mouth of the Kudāliā Canal (probably at its confluence with the Lakhiyā, the site seems to be marked by the village of Kudāliā, 2½ miles south-west of Narayanganj). Still to the south, Mirak Bahādur Jalā'ir was stationed at Sripur, while Jahān Khan Pani and Bāyizid Khan were posted at Vikrampur, facing the enemy forts. The actual outbreak of hostilities was delayed till the advent of the New Year and the celebration of the New Year's Festival (of the year 1020 A. H., *c.* March, 12, 1611).

On the very first day of the New Year, Mirzā Nathan started the campaign with a night attack on Dāud Khān's post at Kātrābhu. The attack was boldly planned and firmly executed, and the Khan was soon compelled to evacuate the fort and flee to Musā Khan.

The capture of this fort was speedily followed by that of Qadam Rasul. Emboldened by Mirzā Nathan's surprise action, Ihtimām Khan came out with the entire fleet from the river Dulāi into the Lakhiyā, and attacked 'Abdullah Khan's post. Tuqmāq Khan from the fort of Kudāliā joined in this attack. Unable to withstand this sudden assault, 'Abdullah Khan vacated Qadam Rasul. This easy success intoxicated the imperial fleet, which began to pursue the enemy boats in a disorderly manner without waiting for the orders and guidance of Ihtimām Khan. The enemy fleet at once turned round and made a counter attack, reducing the victors to serious straits. Mirzā Nathan, who had already arrived to the aid of his father, now saved the situation by diverting the attention of the enemy by a sudden attack, further south, on Musā

Khan's two fortifications near the mouth of the Bandar Canal. The enterprise was completely successful. Musā Khan. taken by surprise, fled; Mirzā Mumin in his rear also followed suit. Mirzā Nathan, leaving his boats behind, then easily forded the canal which was in ebb-tide, and captured 'Alaul Khan's fort without a blow.

These successive defeats so thoroughly unnerved Musā Khan that he thought it unsafe to stay even in his capital. He evacuated Sonārgāon and retreated to the island of Ibrāhimpur (another island in the Meghnā which cannot now be traced), whence he summoned Mirzā Mumin to meet him with all his family and belongings. Hāji Shams-ud-din Baghdādi, the officer in charge of Sonārgāon, then submitted to Islām Khan and formally handed over the city to him.

With the fall of Sonārgāon (*c.* middle of April, 1611) the war with Musā Khan practically ended. The surrender of the capital broke the back of his opposition and symbolised his final acknowledgement of failure, and though he made a few desperate attempts to recover the lost ground, these did not alter the main issue; on the other hand, the fresh reverses only served to hasten his final surrender. But his brother Dāud, continued to fight for the recovery of Kātrābhu. His activities were, however, cut short by the Feringi pirates, who suddenly made a night attack and killed him unrecognised. This new reverse made Musā Khan writhe in grief and rage like a snake; his wounded spirit found vent in a fresh attack on the imperialists, whom he held to be the instigators of the Feringis. Ihtimām Khan and Mirzā Nathan bore the brunt of this attack. Musā Khan laid hold of a deserted fort once raised by the Arakan king in one of his raids during the viceroyalty of Rāja Mān Singh, made necessary repairs, and then marched with his land army and fleet towards the Bandar Canal outpost. But the vigilance of the father and the son saved them. After a skirmis, Musā Khan again retreated to Ibrāhimpur.

After a week, Musā Khan launched another assault and this time on the neighbouring thānah of Kudāliā, taking advantage of the negligence and incompetence of the new thānahdār, Shaikh Rukn, a hard drunkard. The enemy disembarked from their war-boats, took the intoxicated thānahdār totally unawares, and were about to capture the thānah, when help from the Bandar Canal outpost came and this saved the situation. Musā Khan hastily gathered his men and boats together and retreated. After making a futile but a very bloody attempt on the Bandar Canal outpost on his way back, he finally reached his island refuge of Ibrāhimpur. His cause was now lost, and one by one, his followers deserted him and joined the imperialists. Bahādur Ghāzi of Chaurā and Majlis Qutb of

Fathābād waited on Islām Khan, who appropriated their war-boats but spared their zamindaris.

About this time, Islām Khan received an important political mission from the son of Anaporan, governor of Chātgāon and the younger brother of the Arakan king Meng Radzagui (Salim Shah, 1593—1612), who had after a quarrel with his brother, sought refuge with the Portuguese adventurer, Sebastian Gonzales, the master of Sondip, but had been treacherously murdered by that pirate. The nephew of the Arakan king was apparently thirsting for revenge, and he sought the help of the Bengal governor against Sebastian Gonzales, through an envoy. He proposed to meet Islām Khan in person at Dacca, keep his sons as hostages, and, with Mughal help, recover Sondip and hold it in faithful vassalage. But Islām Khan refused to be diverted from his main task.

A more formidable trouble soon appeared. 'Ali Akbar, a petty mansabdar, suddenly rose in revolt in Mālda and carried on looting and plunder of private and State property. Iftikhār Khan hastened from his thānah of Sherpur Murchā to his jagir of Jāipur in Purneā, and succeeded in killing the rebel after a hard fight.

Islām Khan now felt himself free, and sent a large expedition against Rāja Ananta Mānikya of Bhuluā, under the command of Shaikh 'Abdul Wāhid, assisted by Hāji Shams-ud-din Baghdādi (the chief officer of Musā Khan, who had just submitted). The Bhuluā chief prepared to offer a strong opposition. He appealed to the Arakan king (Salim Shah) for help, and the latter, realising the common danger with which they were threatened, readily responded. Ananta Mānikya strengthened the fortifications of his capital, Bhuluā, and, thence moved northwards, and, after marching five stages reached the bank of the Dākātiā river (which rises from the hills of Tipperā and flowing westwards joins the Meghnā near Chāndpur), and raised a strong fort there.

Meantime the Mughal commander advanced to a place opposite the new fort of Ananta Mānikya. Hostilities commenced forthwith; the invaders sent out plundering parties to coerce the common people, but these bore no fruit. Islām Khan at this stage sent reinforcements, but still matters did not much improve. At last the Mughal commander 'Abdul Wāhid had recourse to treachery. He made tempting offers to Mirzā Yusuf Barlās, the chief officer of the Rāja of Bhuluā, and induced him to join the imperialists. Ananta Mānikya hastily evacuated his fort at night and fell back upon his capital. As he was hotly pursued, he failed to make a stand even at Bhuluā, and finally fled to the Arakan kingdom. The imperialists seized all his elephants and otherwise secured a rich booty. Bhuluā

was annexed to the Bengal subah, and the fortified capital was made the seat of an imperial thānah. Another thānah was made eastwards at Jagdiā, which occupied a strategic point at the confluence of the Big Feni river with the Meghnā and marked the south-eastern boundary of the Bengal province.

The rains were now approaching, and Islām Khan made necessary arrangements for protecting his thānahs against Musā Khan. But being dispirited by the defeat of Ananta Mānikya and the success of the imperialists. Musā Khan finally decided to surrender. He opened negotiations for peace through Shaikh Kamāl, and ultimately tendered submission to Islām Khan at Jahāngirnagar, along with his brothers and his remaining confederates.

The Mughal governor showed his prudence and foresight in dealing with his greatest enemy. Musā Khan and his followers were only nominally given back their estates as jagirs but were actually deprived of them and compelled to render personal service in the ranks of the imperialists. Their territories were occupied and their armed forces probably disbanded, but their war-boats were all seized and used as an auxiliary to the imperial fleet. Musā Khan himself was naturally most sternly treated. He lost his personal freedom and was kept under strict surveillance at the viceregal court. Thus, after a year of sternuous warfare (July 1610-July 1611), the first and most formidable task of the new governor was accomplished.

It may be stated in passing that in carrying out his military programme, Islām Khan made a notable departure from the previous practice. While the governors in Akbar's reign had generally conducted all their campaigns in person, Islām Khan did not himself lead even a single campaign, but took great pains in organising his expeditions, shaping the plans, and guiding the operations at every important stage, from the base or capital. He occasionally visited the outposts in the neighbourhood of Dacca, and otherwise kept himself well informed about the progress of the operations by means of swift messengers and spies. In short, though he did not actually lead, he proved to be the life and soul of all his campaigns and supplied also the brain power. He was truly 'the organiser of victories.'

IV. The First Attack on 'Usmān Afghān.

Towards the beginning of October, 1611, Islām Khan gathered a large army for the campaign against 'Usmān. The land force consisted of 1000 picked cavalry and 5000 musketeers (exclusive of those in the fleet), with 300 war-elephants, while the fleet was

composed of 300 imperial war-boats, besides the entire navy of Musā Khan and the other loyal zamindars. The operations were actually conducted by Islām Khan's two favourite officers, Shaikh Kamāl and Shaikh 'Abdul Wāhid, who with the entire land force, marched from Dacca to Hasanpur[1] in three days and encamped there. Ihtimām Khan, with the fleet, and Mirzā Nathan from the thānah of Qadam Rasul, afterwards joined the land army, moving *via* Égārasindur (a wellknown place on the eastern bank of the Brahmaputra, 10 miles from Hasanpur and opposite Tok.) The Mughal plan of operation, however, miscarried, owing to delay in the assembling of the whole force, particularly, some of the war-equipments and the fleet, at Hasanpur. By the time the work of cutting the river bank began at Hasanpur, the flood water so quickly subsided that within three days the water level sank to its normal limit and it became impossible for any vessel to reach Bokāinagar.

The project of a naval attack having failed, Islām Khan fell back upon an attack by land. This proved to be a difficult and slow process owing to the absence of a suitable land route and facilities for transport on the one hand and the dogged hostility of the Afghan chief on the other. Under orders of Islām Khan, Shaikh Kamāl and 'Abdul Wāhid marched cautiously from Hasanpur towards Bokāinagar, making blockhouses all along the way, and keeping the line of communication open, while Ghiyās Khan stayed at Shāh Bandar (midway between Ālapsing and Hasanpur), with the entire fleet, ready to face any emergency.

At this stage an event occurred which appeared in the beginning to be very promising but actually resulted in a serious conspiracy against Islām Khan and the Mughal government in Bengal. The defeat and submission of Musa Khan and his confederates, followed by the campaign against 'Usmān, had naturally alarmed the zamindars in Sylhet, amongst whom Ānwār Khan of Baniāchang held a prominent place. The latter not only voluntarily surrendered to Islām Khan at Dacca but with his brother, Husain Khan, promised him active support against 'Usmān by an attack on his partisans in Sylhet, and, especially, on Taraf, held by his sons and some of his brothers. Islām Khan wanted to take full advantage of this favourable turn of affairs. He permitted Ānwār Khan to hold his territory in fief, and sent him with his fleet to carry out his promised attack. But as soon as the wily Ānwār reached Égārasindur on his way back from Dacca, he entered into a secret plot with Mahmud Khan and Bahādur Ghāzi, who were in the imperial camp, according to which

[1] On the eastern bank of the Brahmaputra, 23 miles south of Bokāinagar.

they would, in alliance with 'Usmān, make a combined attack (they from within and 'Usmān from without) on the forces at Hasanpur and kill or capture them ; while Ānwār, on his part, would try at the same time to imprison the leading mansabdars and carry them off to Baniāchang, after which he would try to imprison Islām Khan at Dacca.

The ambitious conspiracy attained little success. Though Ānwār Khan invited a large number of imperial officers to a banquet, he could entrap only two of them, Islām Quli, in charge of the personal war-boats of Bāz Bahādur Qalmāq, and Rāja Rāy, zamindar of Shāhzādpur, with whom he fled to Baniāchang. The more important part of the plot could not be carried into effect. The secret activities of Mahmud Khan and Bahādur Ghāzi were soon detected and the whole conspiracy was divulged.

Islām Khan, who had reached Tok, took prompt measures. He put Mahmud Khan and Bahādur Ghāzi in fetters and kept them under strict watch. Next, he sent Rāja Satrajit and afterwards Mubāriz Khan, along with a few other zamindars, against Ānwār Khan, and then turned his attention to the prosecution of the war with 'Usmān.

The advance of the invaders with the help of small forts was opposed by 'Usmān almost at every stage, and skirmishes occurred pretty frequently. When the imperialists encamped at the nineteenth fort, the month of Ramzān (28th October to 26th November, 1611) came and hostilities were suspended till the end of the final festivity.

The triumphant march of the invaders, the strength of their numbers, the abundance of their equipments, and, above all, their firm ambition to push forward at all costs, soon broke the back of the Afghan opposition and created division and dissension in the ranks of 'Usmān. Nāsir Khan and Dariyā Khan, two Afghan chiefs of Tājpur (five or six miles north-east of Bokāinagar, where the ruins of an old fort still exist), left 'Usmān and joined the imperialists. Alarmed at this desertion and apprehensive of further depletion of his ranks, 'Usmān decided to evacuate Bokāinagar and seek refuge in Sylhet with Bāyizid Karrāni.

The imperial commanders, Shaikh Kamāl and Shaikh 'Abdul Wāhid, resumed their march after the celebration of the Ramzān 'Id Festival, and occupied the vacant fort of Bokāinagar and halted there.

When Islām Khan received the news of the retreat of 'Usmān and of the dissensions amongst the imperial officers, he ordered the commanders to meet him at Tok, and restored unity and solidarity in his army.

The fall of Bokāinagar (c. end of November, 1611), marked the end of the first stage of the campaign against 'Usmān. The Afghan chief had been expelled from his domain and driven into exile, and the security and safety of the imperial territories along the right bank of the Brahmaputra had been attained. But a renewal of the war seemed certain, and the respite gained could best be utilised in disarming the brothers and allies of 'Usmān. Islām Khan accordingly decided to launch a double campaign,—one against Khwāja Malhi and Khwāja Mumriz, brother and son of 'Usmān, stationed at the fort of Taraf, and the other against Pahlwān, zamindar of Mātang (who had, after the fall of his former leader, Musā Khan, obviously transferred his allegiance to 'Usmān), as also to expedite the campaign already begun against Ānwār Khan, zamindar of Baniāchang.

Ānwār Khan was the first to surrender; Islām Khan sent a strong force under the command of Hāji Shams-ud-din Baghdādi against the Afghan zamindars of Mātang and Taraf. After much fighting the two places fell to the Mughals. Thus one by one Baniāchang, Mātang and Taraf came into the possession of the imperialists, and with these strategic regions as the base of operations, success in the final campaign against Khwāja 'Usmān seemed almost assured.

V. Pratapaditya of Jessore Crushed, 1612.

As there was no sign of the renewal of hostilities by 'Usmān, and there was still sufficient time for carrying on military operations, Islām Khan decided to utilise it in subduing Rāja Pratāpāditya of Jessore. The latter had broken his pledge of military assistance and personal service in the war with Musā Khan, and had thus proved guilty of disloyalty and disobedience as a vassal. When the Jessore king found that Islām Khan was determined to crush all the zamindārs and had already made substantial progress in this direction, he hastened to make amends for his folly, and sent his son, Sangrāmāditya, with 80 war-boats to Islām Khan, with expressions of regret. Islām Khan took up a stern attitude and decided to punish him by conquering his kingdom. He ordered the war-boats sent by the Rāja to be destroyed, and prepared for war.

Islām Khan took all possible steps for ensuring the success of the Jessore campaign. The power, wealth, and military resources of Pratāpāditya were considerable, and a prolonged and severe contest appeared to be certain. A large expedition was accordingly organised. The land force included 1000 picked cavalry and 5000 matchlockmen,

and a number of tried and experienced officers, such as Mirzā Makki, son of Iftikhār Khan, Mirzā Saif-ud-din, Shaikh Ismail Fathpuri, Shāh Beg Khāksār and Lachmi Rājput, while the fleet was composed of 300 imperial war-boats, besides the war-boats of the vassal zamindārs, particularly, those of Musā Khan and Bahādur Ghāzi of Chaurā. The command of the entire force was given to the viceroy's brother Ghiyās Khan (titled 'Ināyet Khan), who had rendered long and valuable services as thānahdār of Ālapsingh, and the imperial fleet and artillery was placed in charge of Mirzā Nathan, son of the *mirbahar* Ihtimām Khan (who was retained for service against Khwāja 'Usmān).

Another force was sent at the same time against Ram Chandra, son of Rāja Kandarpa Nārāyan of Baklā and son-in-law of Pratāpāditya so that no assistance might reach the Jessore king from this side, and that in case Baklā was speedily conquered the imperial contingent might be free to proceed against Jessore from the southeast and completely overpower Pratāpāditya. An equally strong force was employed for purposes of defence, particularly, against 'Usmān. A number of veteran officers, such as Shaikh 'Abdul Wāhid, Shaikh Kamāl, and Mubāriz Khan, were posted at Ēgārasindur with 2000 musketeers while Ihtimām Khan himself, with 400 war-boats, was stationed at the same strategic point.

There was some delay in the assemblage of the imperial officers and forces from the different thānahs. Ghiyās Khan with the land force at his disposal started from Ālapsingh, and after several stages of march, south-westward, crossed the Padmā near Ālāipur, and then moved along the banks of the Jellinghy and its tributary, the Bhairab, till he reached Pākhwān (on the Bhairab, 20 miles north of Krishnagar city), then known as Mahadpur-Bāghwān (Mohatpur, six miles north of Krishnagar city, Rennell's *Bengal Atlas* No. I), where he encamped, awaiting the arrival of the other officers, particularly, Mirzā Nathan, with the fleet.

Mirzā Nathan's arrival at Bāghwān was delayed owing to a rebellion in the jāgir Pargana of Chilājuwār of two zamindars, Pītāmbar (progenitor of the Puthiā Raj family of Rājshāhi) and his nephew, Ananta. Unable to cope with Mirzā Nathan , the rebels sought shelter with the neighbouring zamindār, Ilah Bakhsh of Ālāipur, who gave them ready asylum, and fought hard for some time to shake off Mughal tutelage. The Mughal elephants finally succeeded in breaking open the enemy forts, and the rebels were compelled to disperse. Mirzā Nathan resumed his march with the fleet, and soon joined Ghiyās Khan at Bāghwān, moving along the Ganges, the Jellinghy, and the Bhairab. About the middle of

December, 1611, the entire army marched south-eastwards towards Jessore along the Bhairab and the Ichhāmati, and passing by Bongong (Rennell's *Bengal Atlas*—Bongong about 36 miles south-east of Bāghwān), reached a place named Sālka about 10 miles south of Bongong, near the confluence of the Jamunā and the Ichhāmati. Here the first engagement with Pratāpāditya took place.

The advance of the Mughal army put Pratāpāditya on his mettle. He equipped a strong army and a fleet and placed them under expert officers, including Feringis, Afghans, and Pathans and decided to defend personally his fortified capital Dhumghāt (about 10 miles south of Mukundapur, at a place where the united stream of the Jamunā and the Ichhāmati again separated in two different channels —see S. C. Mitra's *Jashohar-Khulnār Itihās*, Vol. II. 153-54), and he sent his eldest son, Udayāditya, with the greater part of his land army, elephants, artillery, and the fleet (500 war-boats) to hold the strategic point of Sālka. Udayāditya made a big fort at Sālka. It had natural barriers on three sides which rendered it almost impregnable. Udayāditya was assisted by two able officers, Jamāl Khan, son of Qatlu Khan, who was placed in charge of the cavalry and the elephants, and Khwāja Kamāl, who acted as the admiral of the fleet.

The imperialists proceeded towards the enemy fort in a very cautious manner, with two detachments of the land force, one on each bank of the Ichhāmati, immediately supported by two divisions of the imperial fleet and with the general support of the main fleet moving along the river. Udayāditya suddenly appeared on the scene and launched a vigorous attack on the imperialists. Leaving Jamāl Khan in charge of the garrison and the elephants at Sālka fort, he advanced with the entire fleet, putting Khwāja Kamāl in the van with the stronger and more powerful war-boats and floating batteries (*ghurābs*), and himself leading the centre with the other boats.

In the engagement that followed, the Jessore fleet by its overwhelming numbers gained an initial advantage and pressed the imperial navy very hard, the 20 war-boats of the advance guard bearing the brunt of the attack. But the active and steady support of the imperial detachments on both banks of the river not only saved the advance guard but the entire fleet, and soon turned the course of the battle. Finding the enemy war-boats almost surrounding the small advance guard, the Mughal archers and musketeers from the banks of the Ichhāmati began action and succeeded in checking the advance of the enemy. Mirzā Nathān, who, played a conspicuous part in this affair, further distinguished himself by cutting off the

enemy fleet and making a breach in its ranks by a rapid march along the western bank of the river to a point where he found the van under Khwāja Kamāl behind him and the centre under Udayāditya in front and on his flanks. This daring enterprise of Mirzā Nathan broke the unity and discipline of the Jessore fleet, and in the *melee* that followed, Khwāja Kamāl was killed. The fall of the admiral decided the battle. Udayāditya lost heart and hastily fled to his father, narrowly escaping capture. Jamāl Khan also evacuated the fort of Sālka and followed Udayāditya with all the elephants. The imperialists secured a rich booty, the greater part of the fleet and the artillery falling into their hands, and only 42 war-boats escaping with Udayāditya.[1]

The battle of Salka, which closed the first stage of the Jessore campaign, had important consequences. The imperialists secured here a valuable base of operations and could have easily captured the Jessore prince if they had not succumbed to the temptation of looting the valuables in the personal boats left by him. Pratāpāditya's naval arm was broken.

The defeat of the Jessore fleet at Sālka inspite of their superiority of numbers seems to be surprising. The causes are not far to seek. It was a naval battle only in name, and it was really decided on land. The Mughal archers and musketeers posted securely on the high banks of the Ichhāmati, wrought a great havoc on the helpless sailors of the enemy fleet passing below them. Further the very numbers of the Jessore fleet and the heavy build of some of the war-boats, particularly, the *ghurābs*, proved to be a cause of their defeat. They were cramped for space and could not sail freely and in proper order in the Ichhāmati, which was not only narrow but full of bends and turns. The sudden death of the admiral completed the disaster.

The imperialists spent the night at the fort of Sālka, and marching southwards next morning along the western bank of the Ichhāmati, reached the fort of Burhan (Burhanhatty, Rennell's *Bengal Atlas. No. 1.* on the Ichhāmati, at the western corner of Sātkhirā subdivision in Khulnā District, 38 miles east of Fort William in Calcutta) and encamped there.

Meantime the expedition sent against Rājā Rāmchandra had triumphed and reached the skirts of the Jessore kingdom. Though this ruler had barely passed his teens, he decided, under the advice of his Brahmin minister, to offer resistance, and came forward to

[1] *Baharistan,* 49b-52b. Ramram Basu's *Pratapaditya,* (1801), 148-9. The latter corroborates the *Baharistan,* and makes Khwaja Kamāl fight to the death for seven days. Jadunath Sarkar in the *Prabasi,* Kartik, 1327.

make a fort near the imperial entrenchments, and for 7 days fought hard to hold it. But the fort was captured and the imperialists soon penetrated into the heart of the country. The mother of Rāmchandra, who had all along been averse to fighting, now threatened to take poison unless hostilities were suspended, and the young Rājā was soon compelled to tender submission. According to the orders of Islām Khan, Rājā Satrajit escorted Rāmchandra to Dacca. The latter was deprived of his kingdom and also of his personal liberty, like Musā Khan and Ānwār Khan, and kept confined at Dacca.

After the conquest of Baklā, the expeditionary force, according to previous arrangement, moved towards Jessore to join the army engaged in fighting Pratāpāditya.

This new danger stirred Pratāpāditya into fresh activity. He decided to fight a second time from a new base, about 5 miles north of his capital, near the confluence of the Kāgarghāt canal and the Jamunā (wrongly termed the "Bhāgirathi" in the *Baharistan*). He made a big fort at a strategic point, similar to the fort of Sālka, and gathered all his available forces, war-boats, and other war-equipment there. After three days, the imperialists left the fort of Burhan, and, proceeding south-eastward along the Jamunā (or Ichhāmati, the same river is known as the Ichhāmati from the confluence near Tibi *i.e.* Sālka, to Basantapur, and as the Jamunā from Basantpur to Dhumghāt—S. C. Mitra's *Jashohar-Khulnār Itihās*, II, 384), reached the ford of Khārawanghāt after three marches.

Early in the morning of a day at the beginning of January 1612 Mirzā Nathan, with his own forces and the war-boats, began the battle by an attack on the enemy fleet stationed at the confluence of the Kāgarghāt canal and the Jamunā, and pressed it so hard as to compel it to seek shelter beneath the fort. But his further advance, as also the advance of the main imperial fleet beyond the confluence, was checked by the heavy cannonade of the Jessore artillery. As Ghiyās Khan, commander, could not cross the Jamunā to join Mirzā Nathan, the latter, along with Lachmi Rājput, had to play a prominent part in the battle. In the midst of a heavy fire, they succeeded in moving along the Kāgarghāt canal to a point in front of the enemy fort across a quagmire.

The next problem was how to cross the Kāgarghāt canal so as to storm the enemy citadel in the face of the combined resistance of the enemy fleet and fort artillery. Mirzā Nathan decided to divert the attention of the enemy artillery towards him by an attempt to cross the canal by means of elephants protected by coats of mail, taking advantage of which the imperial fleet was to shoot forth from

the confluence into the Jamunā and overpower the Jessore fleet now bereft of the help of their artillery. This plan attained complete success. As Mirzā Nathan began to cross the river, the Jessore artillery opened fire on him and was kept so busy as to be unable to come to the relief of the Jessore fleet, which was suddenly attacked by the imperial fleet and completely defeated. The imperial fleet was then free to turn to the help of Mirzā Nathan, who soon crossed the canal and fell upon the enemy fort with the elephants in front. A severe hand to hand fight followed, and a large number of men were wounded and killed on both sides. At last Pratāpāditya felt compelled to retreat, leaving the fort in the hands of the imperialists, who then encamped at Kāgarghātā.

The second defeat sealed the fate of Pratāpāditya and ended the Jessore campaign. Jamāl Khan, who had so long fought loyally, now abandoned Pratāpāditya and joined the imperialists. The Rājā fell back on his capital 'with a dejected heart and eyes brimming with tears.' Here in consultation with Udayāditya, he decided to give up further resistance. By voluntary submission, he hoped to secure favourable terms from the Bengal governor.

Pratāpāditya lost no time in tendering submission to the imperial commander Ghiyās Khan at Kāgarghātā. The latter was convinced of the Jessore king's sincere desire for peace, treated him very courteously, and ordered the suspension of hostilities. It was arranged that Ghiyās Khan should personally escort Pratāpāditya to Dacca to meet Islām Khan, and pending his final orders, the imperialists should remain at Kāgarghātā, and Udayāditya should continue to hold the capital.

Pratāpāditya's hope of securing a favourable treatment from Islām Khan was not realised. The Jessore king was put in chains.[1] and his kingdom was annexed. His sons also appear to have shared his fate, and were later on sent to Court, from which they were ultimately released owing to the intercession of Ibrāhim Khan Fathjang. Ghiyās Khan was placed in charge of the conquered country, and Khwāja Tāhir Muhammad Bakhshi was sent to assess the revenue of Jessore and arrange for its due realisation. Adequate arrangements were also made for the direct administration of Baklā.

[1] No authentic information is available regarding the last years of Pratāpāditya's life. There may be some truth in the tradition that the Jessore king was kept confined in an iron cage at Dacca, and died at last in Benares, on the way to Delhi, as a prisoner.

Baharistan, 49a-57b, 61: Jadunath Sarkar in *Prabasi*, Kartik, 1327, 19 Satish Chandra Mitra—*Jashohar-Khulnār Itihās*, II. 363-95.

Thus the conquest of Jessore and Baklā was finished in about a month's time (*c*. middle of Dec., 1611—middle of January, 1612), and Islām Khan was now free to take up the unfinished task of disarming Khwāja 'Usmān.

But just at this moment, he had to face a double raid of the Arakanese, which fortunately did not assume serious proportions and lasted for a short time only. Taking advantage of the withdrawal of the garrisons from the frontier thānahs of Sripur and Vikrampur in the south and Bhuluā in the east, the Arakanese lunched, almost simultaneously, two attacks, one on Sripur and Vikrampur, and the other on Bhuluā. Shaikh Yusuf and 'Abdul Wāhid, the thānahdārs of Sripur-Vikrampur and of Bhuluā respectively, were unable to offer any effective resistance owing to their paucity of troops, and particularly of war-boats, and the Arakanese, who had suddenly fallen upon Sripur with 300 war-boats, carried on their plundering activities with impunity, looting and burning a good many villages and hamlets and carrying away a large number of captives. The villages and the people round Bhuluā shared the same fate. Islām Khan sent a relieving force under Shaikh Ashraf Hansiwāl and Mirzā Nur-ud-din to Sripur and Vikrampur, but it arrived after the raiders had left. The Arakanese hastily withdrew from Bhuluā also, leaving desolation and distress in their train. (*Baharistan*, 58b—60a.)

APPENDIX I

It is necessary to clear some misconception that prevails regarding the time-table of Islam Khan's appointment as governor of Bengal, his assumption of office at Rajmahal, and of his subsequent march from Rajmahal to Dacca, at the end of the first stage of his war with Musā Khan. Dr. Borah (Baharistan, II, 791-92, 813-14) and Dr. N. K. B. (B. P & P., Part II, 48-49), relying on the dates given in the Baharistan (2b, 3a, 21b) in preference to the dates deducible from the Tuzuk and the Iqbalnamah and the dates definitely mentioned in Abdul Latif's Diary (Prabasi, 1326, Aswin, p 552-3), has suggested that the date of Islam Khan's appointment as governor should be pushed back by a year from May 1608 to May, 1607, and that the date of Islam Khan's arrival at Dacca should be similarly pushed back by two years from the end of July, 1610, to the end of July, 1608.

Apart from the acknowledged fact that the Baharistan is very deficient in dates, in sharp contrast with the other contemporary Persian

chronicles, particularly, the Tuzuk, in which almost every important event is dated, the definite dates mentioned in the Baharistan on which Dr. Borah relies cannot at all be fitted into the time-table of events narrated in detail in the text. According to these dates, Ihtimam Khan was granted by the Emperor leave to start for Bengal on the 5th Rabi-ul-Awal. 1016 A.H. (30th June, 1607) and he actually started after the Emperor had reviewed his fleet on the 9th Rabi-ul-Awal, 1016 A.H. (4th July, 1607), and the imperial fleet entered the Ichhamati through an excavated canal with a view to attacking Musā Khan's fort of Dākcharā on the 27th Rābi-ul-Awal, 1017 A.H. (11th July, 1608). It means that the whole series of events—Ihtimam Khān's long journey from Agra to Rajmahal through the Ganges, with frequent stoppages, Islam Khan's activities at Rajmahal prior to his departure along the Ganges for Lower Bengal, his slow march through the hostile country, his campaigns against numerous zamindars on the way, his kheda operations at Nazirpur, his encampment at Ghoraghat for the rains, his resumption of warfare against the zamindars, his encampment at Shahzadapur and celebration of the Ramzan festival, his prolonged conflict with Musā Khan culminating in the capture of Dākcharā fort after 35 days of fighting, all these are to be crowded into one year only. That this did not actually happen, and that at least two rainy seasons, instead of one, actually elapsed between Ihtimam's starting from Agra and the conquest of Dākcharā, is evident from the Baharistan. In p. 5a we find that Ihtimam Khan reached Akbarnagar from Agra on the day fixed for marching towards Bhati, on the same day on which Pratapaditya's envoy also came, obviously at the end of the rains when campaigning was possible, and in p. 9a we again find Islam Khan marching from Shahpur towards Ghoraghat to spend the rains there, with a view to resuming his march towards Bhati after the appearance of the Canopus. That Ihtimam Khan, who had started with a large fleet from Agra on 4th July, 1607, could not reach Akbarnagar or Rajmahal covering a distance of about 270 miles through the Ganges, with a haltage at Patna for a week, with an additional haltage at Allahabad, a pilgrimage at Jhunsi, a fight with pirates at Chajuha (probably 25 miles down Jhunsi), and then a trip from Patna to Rhotas and back, covering an additional distance of about 200 miles, with a fresh haltage of 12 days at Rhotas, before the beginning of October, 1607, appears only too probable. It means, therefore, that the rains of 1607 were passed by Ihtimam Khan on the way to Rajmahal and those of 1608 at Ghoraghat. If this be correct, the date of entry of the imperial fleet into the Ichhamati must be pushed forward at least by a year, roughly to some time in

July 1609, even on the assumption that the date of Ihtimam Khan's move from Agra to Rajmahal was 4th July, 1607. This assumption also appears untenable. That Ihtimam Khan was appointed mirbahar of the Bengal fleet about the same time, if not on the same date as Islam Khan was appointed subahdar, is quite clear from the Tuzuk (R. & B. I. 143-44), and that the date of Islam Khan's appointment was on or after the 20th Muharram, 1017 A.H. (6th May, 1608), and not 1014 A.H. as the Aligarh edition of the text of the Tuzuk wrongly has it (pp. 67, 68), can also easily be established by a scrutiny of some of the dates before and after this particular date in the Tuzuk itself [3rd Safar, obviously of 1016 A.H. (30th May, 1607), date of Qutb-ud-din Khan Kokas' death at Burdwan, (R. & B. I., 85, 113), 14th Zil Hijja, 1017 (21st March, 1609), date of celebration of the Fourth New Year's Feast after the accession by the Emperor (R. & B. I. 154)] substantiated by the evidence of the Iqbalnamah and Abdul Latif's Diary, so that the actual dates of the appointment of Islam Khan and Ihtimam Khan to their respective offices in Bengal were 6th May, 1608, and that the date of entry of the imperial fleet into the Ichhamati was after the lapse of two rainy seasons from this date, that of 1608 spent by Islam Khan at Rajmahal and that of 1609 at Ghoraghat, sometime in July, 1610. In the light of these remarks there is hardly any reason to hold that the dates deduced from the texts of the Tuzuk and the Iqbalnamah seem to be wrong and that the evidenee of the Baharistan is to be preferred to other authorities.

CHAPTER XV.

LAST ACHIEVEMENTS OF ISLĀM KHAN.

I. Fall of 'Usmān Afghan.

The final expedition against Khwāja 'Usmān was organised on an imperial and not a provincial scale, and many high officers from outside Bengal were employed in it. Its importance can be judged from the fact that it is the only Bengal affair described in detail in Jahangir's autobiography. Shujā'at Khan, a member of the family of the venerable Shaikh Salim Chishti and a great favourite of the Emperor, was summoned from the Deccan and entrusted with the chief command. He with his elder brother Shaikh Bāyizid, a nephew named Shaikh 'Isā, and a son named Shaikh Qāsim, was the first to reach Dacca and meet Islām Khan. At first it was decided to try peaceful measures to win over 'Usmān and an urgent message was sent through a courier in which the Afghan leader was advised to give up his obstinacy, arrogance, and lust of power, and voluntarily tender submission, so as to save himself and his thousands of followers. 'Usmān sent a spirited reply. He retorted that after many vicissitudes of fortune, he had retired to a quiet corner of the country where he wanted to live in peace, leaving the Mughals masters of the entire region, and that if the latter were determined to oust him even from that corner, he would have no other alternative than to take up arms and try his luck again.

Islām Khan knew well that Sylhet was the stronghold of the Afghans and that Bāyizid Karrāni was their acknowledged leader. It was he who had given asylum to 'Usmān, and if 'Usmān was to be finally crushed, Bāyizid also must be subdued. Two expeditions of almost equal strength must therefore be fitted out and sent at the same time, one against Bāyizid in Sylhet, the other against 'Usmān in his new citadel of Uhār, in the southern extremity of the Sylhet district (indentified by Sir Jadunath Sarkar, in *Prabasi*, Agrahayan, 1328, p. 148, with *Patan Ushār*, one mile north-west of Sri Shuiya or Sriuji, 16 miles east of the north-east corner of Hāil Hāor in the Maulavibāzār subdivision of Sylhet).

The force under Shujā'at Khan consisted of a large body of horse and foot, including 500 picked cavalry of Islām Khan, and 4000 musketeers, with a large number of elephants and the whole of

the imperial fleet in charge of Ihtimām Khan, together with the war-boats of Sonā Ghāzi, the vassal zamindar of Sarāil.

The command of the expedition against Bāyizid was given to Shaikh Kamāl. This army comprised a large number of foot soldiers, 1000 picked cavalry of Islām Khan, 4000 musketeers, with 100 war-elephants and the entire fleet seized from Musā Khan and his confederates. Starting from Dacca, Shujā'at Khan encamped at the fort of Sarāil, now an inland place, 7 miles north of the sub-divisional town of Brāhmanbāriā, but even in Rennell's time a river flowed by Sarāil into the Megnā. (Sheet No. VI.) As it was not thought advisable for the fleet to move any further, it was stationed at Sarāil in charge of Mālik Husain, nephew of Ihtimām Khan, and the land force then resumed its march along the banks of the Megnā towards the north-east for about 34 miles and reached the fort of Taraf in nine marches.

Shujā'at Khan rested for a day at Taraf, and leaving a small garrison in that fort, marched next morning northwards till he came near the foot of the hill-pass of Tupiā or Putiā (*Putyajury*, about 5 miles north of 'Tarroff,' skirting the Satgaon hills—Rennell's *Bengal Atlas, VI*, is probably meant) and encamped there. At this strategic point, the first engagement with the enemy was to be expected. Khwāja Wali, the third brother of Khwāja 'Usmān, was guarding the hill-pass with two forts, a bigger one made on the top of the pass, and a smaller one, a block house, made in the middle. But the advancing Mughals found both posts abandoned. The *Baharistan* commenting on the cowardice and incompetence of Khwāja Wali, says that "he gave up a post which could be defended even by an old woman, not to speak of iron-clad warriors and artillery men," thereby doing the greatest disservice to the cause of 'Usmān and paving the way for a cleavage in his ranks.

Shujā'at Khan halted for a day at the fort of Putiā for celebrating the festival of Sacrifice (*'Id-i-Qurbān*, 3rd February, 1612) and resumed his march next morning. The imperialists formed their battle array in the following order. The centre was led by the commander-in-chief himself, aided by Mu'taqid Khan and Ihtimām Khan: the van was placed in charge of Mirzā Nathan, aided, among others, by Sayyid Ādam, Shaikh Āchhā, Mirzā Qāsim, and Sonā Ghāzi, zamindar of Sarāil: the right wing was entrusted to Iftikhār Khan, and the left to Kishwar Khan: the command of the advance-reserve was given to Shaikh Qāsim, son of Shujā'at Khan. At this stage, reinforcements in men and material sent by Islām Khan arrived, in the form of one thousand cavalry, a large number of musketeers, and a large quantity of food stuff.

At the news of the steady advance of Shujā'at Khan towards his capital, 'Usmān marched forward to face him in the following order. He himself led the centre with a force of 2000 picked cavalry 5000 infantry, and 40 war-elephants. Khwāja Wali was placed on the left wing with 1000 cavalry, 2000 infantry, and 30 elephants, and Shir-i-Maydān, a trusty slave, on the right wing with 700 cavalry, 1000 infantry, and 20 elephants. The van was entrusted to Khwāja Malhi and Khwāja Ibrāhim, younger brothers of 'Usmān, and Khwāja Dāud, his nephew, with 1500 cavalry, 2000 infantry, and 50 elephants. From his capital, Uhār, 'Usmān proceeded eastward for about 12 or 13 miles, covering the distance in two marches, and reached the village of Dawlambāpur in the "Forty-four Parganas" (exact place not yet fixed—probably a village about a mile or half a mile north of Hāil Hāor, four or five miles south of Maulavibāzār, and six or seven miles east of Putyājury—*vide Prabasi*, Agrahayan, 1328, p. 148) and entrenched there. The place was well-chosen. It was at a distance of a mile and a half from the camp of the imperialists and separated from the latter by a big quagmire, which was fringed by a large and thick row of areca-nut trees. By means of planks fastened to these trees, a sort of raised battery was made on which guns were mounted. From this well fortified position behind the quagmire, 'Usmān bade defiance to the imperialists.

Shujā'at Khan fully realised the difficulty of the situation. 'Usmān had selected an almost impregnable position for defence, compelling his assailants to take the offensive and fight in an inconvenient position. The Mughal general moved forward and made his entrenchments near the bog at a distance of half a *kos* from those of 'Usmān.

Hostilities commenced in the morning of Sunday, the 12th March, 1612 (9th Muharram, 1021 A.H.); the imperialists opened the attack on the right wing of 'Usmān, (under Shir-i-Maydān), on being falsely informed by an officer of the van that the enemy right was about to fall upon them. This false alarm disturbed the order of the imperialist forces. The solidarity of the van was broken. While one division of the van swerved towards the left to the aid of the left wing under Kishwar Khan, another division turned to the right and advanced towards the row of areca-nut trees bordering this side of the bog. 'Usmān readily took advantage of this confusion in his enemy's van and sent a body of infantry across the bog to attack the second division of it. A severe hand-to-hand fight followed and the small imperialist division was about to be overthrown. As both parties got mixed up in the close combat, Mirzā Nathan, the leader of the van, could not use his artillery for fear of killing his own men. To make matters worse, the imperial artillery, which

was posted at the main entrenchments at a distance of more than a *kos*, opened fire from behind, killing one of their own officers, Shaikh Āchhā, and dispersing the rest.

The confusion in the van also affected the right wing under Iftikhār Khan. As soon as his soldiers saw the second division of the van moving towards the right, they became restive, broke their ranks, and rushed forward. The disorder here grew worse when one imperial elephant became heated and charged another. Iftikhār Khan was soon cut off from the rest of the force, and, with only 42 horsemen and 14 foot soldiers, crossed the bog and fell upon the left wing of 'Usmān led by Wali. This sudden attack unnerved Wali and he was about to be overpowered. At this critical moment, 'Usmān rushed to the help of Wali, rebuked him for his cowardice, and fell upon the small body of imperialists led by Iftikhār Khan and completely surrounded them. Most of the soldiers were wounded or killed, Iftikhār Khan himself being slain.

While the right wing of the imperialists was thus utterly broken up by 'Usmān, the left wing under Kishwar Khan, which had launched an attack on the Afghan right, aided by a division of the van, fared no better at the hands of 'Usmān's favourite slave, Shir-i-Maydān. The latter made a vigorous countercharge with his elephants in front, and, after a short fight, succeeded in overwhelming the left wing, killing Kishwar Khan along with Sayyid Ādam (an officer of the van), wounding many, and compelling the rest including Sonā Ghāzi, zamindar of Sarāil, (who was also in the van), to retreat towards the main camp. The victorious Afghan commander pursued the fugitives till he came upon the main imperial entrenchments. His further advance being here checked by the artillery, he fell back striking the rear of the imperial van (under Mirzā Nathan) now much reduced in number.

Mirzā Nathan for a time made a stand against the Afghan commander and compelled him to retire, but the latter was soon joined by Mumriz (the son of 'Usmān) and renewed the attack. In this engagement two Afghan elephants, Bāz and Bakhtā, wrought great havoc on the imperial van, the latter elephant narrowly missed crushing Mirzā Nathan to death by lifting him bodily with his horse and then dashing him against the ground. Mirzā Nathan was wounded and carried unconscious to the camp. This accident completed the discomfiture of the van which gave up further fighting and fell back on the advance-reserve and also on the centre. A close and bloody combat continued for some time between the prominent officers of the advance-reserve and those of the Afghan vanguard, the latter prevailing in the end.

The cause of the imperialists appeared to be lost. Their right and left wings had been thoroughly defeated and the commanders of both slain. Their vanguard also had suffered a similar reverse and had retreated discomfited. The one ray of hope lay in the centre which was still unassailed.

The centre under Shujā'at Khan had now to bear the brunt of the attack of the triumphant enemy. A severe fight ensued in which the Afghans succeeded in breaking the centre and isolating the commander-in-chief. An attempt was then made to capture or kill him along with his standard-bearer with the help of 'Usmān's raging elephant named Bakhtā. This elephant tried to seize Shujā'at Khan and pin him to the ground; it succeeded in throwing him off his horse, and only the personal valour and cool judgement of Shujā'at Khan together with the timely help of his faithful personal attendants saved him. Another elephant charged the standard-bearer mounted on a horse, and bore him with the standard down to the ground. Shujā'at Khan hurried to his rescue, and mounting him on another horse, made him unfurl the standard again. The elephant Bakhtā was ultimately killed.

When the imperialists had thus been reduced to a perilous position, as the result of bitter fighting from early morning till mid-day, and the victory of the Afghans seemed certain, the tide of fortune rolled back owing to an unforeseen accident. This was the infliction of a mortal wound upon Khwāja 'Usmān by a Mughal horseman, named Shaikh 'Abdul Jalil, a devoted follower of Iftikhār Khan. Determined to avenge the loss of his leader, 'Abdul Jalil rushed towards 'Usmān, who was compelled to ride on an elephant owing to his corpulence, and shot an arrow at him at so close a range that it passed through his left eye into the brain. 'Usmān pierced his assailant through with his javelin, and then drew out the arrow with his own hand, but in so doing, he lost also his right eye (which came out of its socket), and became totally blind. Nothing daunted, the valiant Afghan covered his eyes with a handkerchief with his left hand, so as to conceal his fatal wound from the gaze of his followers, while, with his right hand, he beckoned his elephant-driver to proceed towards Shujā'at Khan. But he rapidly lost his speech and died. The news of the death of 'Usmān was carefully concealed, and Mumriz, his son, promptly conveyed the body of the dead chieftain on the back of his elephant to the camp, and himself returned to the field. But the life and soul of the struggle for independence was gone, and the Afghans, deprived of their great leader, continued desultory fighting till the end of the day, and then decided to flee to Uhār at night.

The imperialists, who were yet unaware of this favourable turn of affairs, returned to their camp at dusk, dejected and dispirited owing to their heavy loss of officers and men, and passed the night with great vigilance. Sometime before day-break (Monday, the 13th March, 1612), some of the soldiers, who were mounting guard advanced towards the Afghan camp but found no trace of the enemy and reported the welcome news to the commander-in-chief. But in view of the dearth of officers and men, and, particularly, of the uncertainty regarding the fate of 'Usmān, Shujā'at Khan did not think it advisable to pursue the enemy.

Thus the battle of Daulambāpur, which had began so well for 'Usmān and the Afghans, finally ended in disaster to them, and the imperialists blundered into victory. The battle, which was a brief morning's affair and was practically finished by mid-day, evinced the definite superiority of the Afghans to the Mughals in generalship, tactics, and discipline. In fact, the Mughals failed to make a stand anywhere, and were defeated at every point, and the Afghans, and, especially, their well-trained elephants, carried everything before them and wrought great havoc on their opponents. The Mughals finally snatched victory out of defeat, but it was solely due to an act of Providence, the fall of 'Usmān in battle 'struck by the arrow of Fate' which left the Afghans without a leader.

The sons and brothers of 'Usmān, in consultation with Wali Mandu-Khel. the minister, left the camp quietly for Uhār after midnight. The body of 'Usmān was to be buried there, and the members of his harem were to be killed, lest they should fall into the hands of the imperialists, and, with Mumriz, the eldest son of 'Usmān, formally installed as their leader, the war of independence was to be resumed. The body of 'Usmān was accordingly conveyed to Uhār within 24 hours and buried in a secluded spot between two hills, while a false tomb was prepared in the yard of his palace (which was locally termed the Big Bungalow), by the side of which all his wives, and daughters, except one, already betrothed and now given in marriage to his nephew Dāud, were buried, after they had been put to the sword. All the Afghans then gave the turban and the sword of 'Usmān to Mumriz and swore allegiance to him, and then prepared for renewing the war.

But the project failed on account of new divisions and dissensions amongst the Afghan leaders and their scrambles for power. With 'Usmān, the solidarity and unity of the Afghans was gone, and the machinations of Wali to supplant Mumriz from power spelt ruin to the Afghans. Wali had already showed his cowardice and incompetence by his hasty retreat from the fort of Putiā as

also in the battle of Daulambāpur, and he now gave proof of his lust for power by intriguing with his father-in-law, Wali Mandu-Khel, minister of 'Usmān, to overthrow Mumriz and step into his place. Though Mumriz made a laudable attempt to keep up unity by a voluntary abdication in favour of his uncle Wali, the latter failed to win the support of the Afghan chiefs, and even of his own brother, Malhi. Instead of trying to win over Malhi by peaceful means, Wali put him in chains and kept him confined in his house. This cruel and tactless conduct disgusted all the Afghan chiefs who refused to serve under Wali, and the *Baharistan* justly remarks that 'owing to the evil ways of Khwāja Wali, the whole of the Afghan army fell into disorder'. Unwilling to part with power, and eager to maintain his leadership even at the cost of his own independence and the interests of his clan, Wali betrayed the cause of the Afghans by opening negotiations for peace with Shujā'at Khan.

Meantime, the position of the imperialists had much improved with the arrival of reinforcements under 'Abdus Salām and Mirzā Maqsud. Shujā'at Khan marched towards Uhār, but near the capital, Wali Mandu-Khel came to see him along with Ya'qub, the younger brother of Mumriz, and prayed for a week's respite to bring in Wali and the other Afghan nobles for tendering submission. Shujā'at Khan agreed to wait on condition that all the elephants except 25 female ones, exempted for purposes of transport, were surrendered within two days. The demand was complied with, and the imperial commander resuming his march, encamped at Āiniyā (not identified) and awaited the arrival of the Afghans.

On the eleventh day of the month of Muharram, 4th March, 1612, Khwāja Wali, Khwāja Malhi, Khwāja Ibrāhim, the brothers of Khwāja 'Usmān, Khwāja Dāud (nephew), and Khwāja Mumriz and Khwāja Ya'qub, sons of 'Usmān, along with Wali Mandu-Khel and other Afghan notables totalling 400 men, tendered their submission, and were given robes of honour and lavishly entertained by Shujā'at Khan.

The commander-in-chief posted troops to hold Uhār, and then started on his return journey to Dacca, holding in custody the brothers and sons of 'Usmān and the leading Afghan nobles, and leaving garrisons in the strategic forts of Taraf and Sarāil. At the latter place, Ihtimām Khan, the *Mirbahar* of the Bengal flotilla suddenly died. At Sarāil, the imperial fleet rejoined the army, and the whole body entered Dacca on the 7th Safar (8th April, 1612).

Islām Khan annexed the domain of 'Usmān, disbanded his army, ordered his brothers and sons to be kept in confinement

pending their despatch to the imperial Court, and sent a full report of the whole affair to the Emperor. The Emperor, who was then at Agra, heaved a sigh of relief that 'through the unstinted mercy of the Almighty Giver, Bengal had been freed from the disturbance of 'Usmān, the Afghan' (*Tuzuk*, R. B. I. 207, 214), and as a reward for this good service, he promoted Islām Khan to the rank of 6000 personal, honoured Shujā'at Khan with the title of 'Rustam of the Age' (*Rustam-i-Zamān*), and also increased his rank by 1000 personal and horse.[1]

II. Conquest of Sylhet

The tragic end of the war of independence waged by 'Usmān ultimately determined the fate of the struggle led by Bāyizid Karrāni against the Mughal expeditionary force commanded by Shaikh Kamāl. This general on reaching the outskrits of Bāyizid's domain, began a series of plundering raids in order to terrorise the inhabitants into submission.

Islām Khan decided to strengthen the force against Bāyizid by sending to Shaikh Kamāl a large body of reinforcements received from Bihār with the necessary equipment and rations. That general had in the meantime, reached the bank of the river Surmā, at some distance from the fort of Sylhet, the capital of Bāyizid.

Apprised of the rapid advance of the imperialists, Bāyizid sent his younger brother Ya'qub at the head of a large number of Afghan chiefs to make a fort on the bank of the Surmā outside the environs of his fortified capital, and check the further progress of the enemy.

At this news, Shaikh Kamāl despatched Raja Satrajit, with other vassals, to make a fort on the bank of the Surmā, opposite

[1] Tuzuk (R. B. I. 208-15, 230) : Iqbalnamah, 60-65 : *Baharistan*, MS. 62a-78b, 97a-98a, also Dr. Borah's Translation, I. 100-113, 157-206, 209, 215 and J. N. Sarkar, *Prabasi, Agrahayan*, 1328, 145-153 : Makhzan-i-Afghani in Dorn's Translation, Part I. 183-84, and in Blochmann's Translation of the Ain-i-Akbari, I. 520-21 ; Herbert's *Travels* (London, 1638), p. 77, *Riyaz* (Abd. Salām's tr.) 173-79 ; Stewart, 130-35 : Beni Prasad, History of Jahangir, 208-13 :

In the light of the detailed and fairly accurate account supplied in the *Baharistan* by Mirzā Nathan, who was the leader of the Mughal van at the battle of Daulambāpur, confirmed generally by the *Tuzuk* and *Makhzan-i-Afghani*, many misconceptions still current regarding some of the important details of the 'Usman episode may be corrected, e.g., the site of the final battle, the capital of 'Usman in Sylhet, the precise manner of his death, the treatment accorded to his sons and brothers, etc.

'Usmān's captive brothers and sons were produced before Jahāngir on 13th September, 1612.

the fort of Ya'qub, and 'in front of Kadamtālā (unidentified) which was outside the town of Sylhet'. The Raja crossed the Surmā under cover of the artillery and fell upon the fort of Ya'qub, and after a week's fighting, captured this fort. When the first rumour of 'Usmān's discomfiture was found to be baseless, Bāyizid and Ya'qub renewed the operations with greater vigour. The position of the Afghans was at this time strengthened by the arrival of a large force from the Raja of Kachār.

Raja Satrajit, who had to bear the brunt of this renewed attack failed to cope with it. After a feeble resistance, he gave up the captured fort, and fell back upon the fortifications on the other side of the Surmā. At last after some more fighting in which the imperialists were sorely pressed, the news of the fall of 'Usmān and of the final victory of Shujā'at Khan came as a fatal blow to Bāyizid and his men. Their resistance collapsed and they begged for peace. Bāyizid handed over all his elephants to Shaikh Kamāl, and arranged to accompany the latter, with Ya'qub and the leading Afghan chiefs and his whole family, to Dacca for tendering submission to the subahdar.

Leaving a trusty officer for the administration of Sylhet, and placing Mubāriz Khan in charge of the imperial forces, Shaikh Kamāl proceeded to Dacca with the Afghan vassals and the elephants, reaching the capital after Shujā'at Khan's arrival there.

Islām Khan received the new vassals with greater pomp, and treated them with greater severity than in the case of 'Usmān's sons and brothers. Sylhet was formally annexed to the Bengal subah, and the administrative arrangements made tentatively by Shaikh Kamāl were approved. Bāyizid, his brother, and the leading Afghan chiefs were deprived of their personal liberty and kept in close custody. (*Baharistan*, 63a-64b, 66b-67a, 75a-76a, 98a : *Tuzuk* and *Iqbālnāmah* are silent on the Sylhet war).

III. Kachār invaded

Islām Khan next turned his attention towards Kachār, and sent Shaikh Kamāl for the conquest of that country. The latter first came to Sylhet, made it the base of his operations, and with additional officers and men, including Mubāriz Khan and 22 āmirs from Bihar, proceeded against the Kachār king.

The Kachār king, Satrudaman, *alias* Pratāp Nārāyan (c. 1605-28), who was noted for his ability and ambition, determined to offer a strong resistance. His capital, Maibung, situated in the midst of the North Kachār hills, about 50 miles north of Silchar town,

was inaccesible to the invaders. He strengthened his defences by making two forts, at two strategic points on the western frontier of his kingdom, one on the north-western border at Asurātekar (probably modern Haritikar) and the other probably on the south-western border at Pratāpgarh, about 20 miles south-west of Asurātekar, situated in the midst of a dense forest.[1]

The Mughal commander marched south-westwards for about 35 miles and reached the vicinity of the fort of Pratāpgarh, and attempted to take it by assault. The Kachāris, who were expert in night attacks and guerilla warfare, made repeated night attacks and also otherwise harassed the Mughals by cutting off stragglers from their camp. After a month's stubborn opposition, they were, however, compelled to give way and retreat to the hill-fort of Asurātekar.

The imperialists occupied the fort of Pratāpgarh, and then proceeded towards the north-east, and probably encamped on the left bank of the Barak opposite the fort of Asurātekar. After more stubborn fighting this fort too was taken.

The loss of the two frontier forts cooled the military ardour of the Kachār king, and he offered to come to terms with the Mughals. Shaikh Kamāl readily responded to his appeal for peace, and sent a report to Islām Khan. The latter approved of Shaikh Kamāl's action, and a peace was patched up with the Kachār king.

But Islām Khan was thwarted in his design by an interference, probably for the first time, from the Emperor, who had received repeated reports of his autocratic and arrogant conduct, particularly towards the officers sent from Court, and of his partiality for his own men. The measures which Jahāngir had taken to rectify the abuse, including a seventeen-point *farmān*[2] had not proved effective, and the Emperor felt it necessary to openly intervene and send a peremptory *farmān* disapproving of Islām Khan's hasty peace with the Kachār king, and asking him to renew the campaign under the command of Mubāriz Khan, an imperial officer, in the place of Shaikh Kamāl. The Bengal governor was compelled to obey.

[1] Allen, *Assam District Gazetteer*, Vol. II. Chap. I. p. 62, refers to the remains of a mud fort, 2 miles north-east of the Pātharkandi Police Station, in Karimganj subdivision and in pargana Pratāpgarh, Sylhet, of Raja Pratāp Singh, whom he describes as a local chiftain, but who appears to be Raja Indra Pratāp Nārāyan of Kachār.

[2] *Tuzuk* (R. B. I. 205) : *Baharistan*, 102b-103a. Though the *farmān* was issued for the guidance of the subahdars in general, almost every clause appears to have been aimed at Islām Khan, who was more than any one of his colleagues, guilty of breaches of the rules framed.

Mubāriz Khan established a thānah at Asurātekar and then proceeded towards the capital of the Kachār king. Alarmed at the determined attitude of the imperialists, the Kachār ruler now definitely tendered his submission and sealed it with the payment of a suitable tribute. (*Baharistan,* 101a, 105a-b).

IV. Dacca made Capital

About this time, some changes occurred in the government of the Bengal subah, Mirzā Husain Beg, the new diwān, reached Dacca and took charge of his office. A new office of *waqi'a-navis* (a news-writer) was created, and Āgā Yaghmā Isfahāni, who was appointed to this post, reached Dacca soon after the new diwān. The *waqi'anavis* was appointed to watch the activities of the subahdār and send regular reports to court without reference to him.

With the submission of the Kachār king about the end of May, 1612, the process of conquest and consolidation initiated by Islām Khan practically reached its completion, and the whole of Bengal, including Sylhet and Kachār, was now brought under the effective control of the Mughal government. Islām Khan now signalised the final establishment of imperial authority over the entire province by the inauguration of Dacca, the scene of his activities for the last two years, as the new capital, in place of Rājmahal. He renamed the city Jahāngirnagar, in honour of the reigning sovereign.

This transfer of the capital was not the outcome of a preconceived plan on the part of Islām Khan, but rather the result of exigencies of circumstances. Dacca grew into political and military importance owing mainly to its strategic position. As a result of the prolonged stay of the Bengal viceroy Mān Singh (1602-1604) here, a town sprang up round the old imperial outpost of Dacca, serving as the nucleus of the future capital. Mān Singh seems to have strengthened the fortifications of Dacca, so that it soon came to be regarded as one of the four fortresses of the Bengal subah. The same military and political exigencies attracted Islām Khan as well to Dacca, and his continued residence there finally determined its status. From a military settlement, Dacca became the seat of the civil government, and ultimately emerged as the official capital of the Bengal subah, and it also became a busy centre of trade and industries.

Islām Khan himself contributed much to the development of Dacca. A new fort was built, inside which a new palace was constructed, no vestige of which now exists, and new roads were laid down, all skirting the river which is at present known as the

Buriganga. The defences of the city were improved by means of two forts made on either side of the point where the river Dulai bifurcated (one branch joining the Lakhiyā at Demrā and the other at Khizrpur,) described by the author of the *Baharistan* as the forts of Beg Murād Khan, and also by means of artificial canals, the course of some of which may still be traced.

Rājmahal, the old capital, on the other hand, was gradually abandoned. A change in the course of the Ganges on which this city stood had set in, by which the river finally receded nearly a *kos*, making the city inaccessible to war-boats and unsuitable for strong defence. Further, as the centre of political interest had now definitely shifted from northern and western Bengal to southern and eastern Bengal, the political importance of Rājmahal was bound to diminish. A number of other issues besides the decay of Rājmahal were at work in regard to the transfer of the capital, foremost of which was the determination of Islām Khan to subdue Musā Khan and the Twelve Bhuiyās first and Khwāja 'Usmān of Bokāīnagar next, for the fulfilment of which Dacca was most favourably situated. Another important motive appears to have been the suppression of the Magh and Feringi pirates, for which a convenient place was required from which a close watch on the usual routes followed by the pirates could be kept.

The establishment of the capital at Dacca by Islām Khan early in April, 1612, was an event of great importance in the history of Mughal rule in Bengal. For nearly a century, with a short break about the middle, Dacca continued to hold its proud position of the provincial metropolis. During this time there was an all round development of the city. It extended in territory, its trade and industries developed, its commerce flourished, and it also attracted a large number of foreigners whose accounts throw much light on the wealth and general prosperity of Dacca in the seventeenth century.

V. Conquest of Kāmrup, 1613

Now that the hands of Islām Khan were free, he determined to renew his attack on Kāmrup. The dynastic jealousy between the rival houses of Kuch Bihār and Kāmrup, had prompted an unprovoked attack on the Kuch frontier districts of Bāhirband and Bhitarband by Parikshit by which his sway had been pushed up to Salkonā in the south-west. Raja Raghunāth of Shushang was a Mughal vassal, but Parikshit had captured this Raja's family and the Bengal

viceroy now promised to recover the captives by conquering Kāmrup.

Early in November, 1612 Islām Khan sent a large expedition against Kāmrup under Mukarram Khan, with Shaikh Kamāl as second in command, and Rāja Raghunāth as the guide. This force included 1000 picked cavalry, 5000 musketeers, 300 state elephants, and 400 imperial war-boats, besides 100 war-boats of Musā Khan under his admiral 'Ādil Khan. A large number of imperial officers, including 22 officers of Bihār, and vassal zamindars, including Afghan mansabdārs of Bāyizid and 'Usmān, joined the expedition.

From Dacca the invaders marched by way of Bhāwāl, Tok (8 December, 1612), Bajrapur, and Patlādā (south of the Karibāri hills) till they reached Salkonā, on the left bank of the Brahmaputra; midway between Patlādā and Hātsilā. Here the Kāmrup flotilla (300 war-boats) offered battle, but after a hard fight was overpowered, leaving most of its boats to the victorious Mughals.

From Salkonā the army (reinforced in the meantime) proceeded northwards very cautiously along the banks of the Brahmaputra, skirted by hills and dense forests, and arrived near Dhubri. Before attacking this stronghold, it was decided to secure the line of communication by conquering Parikshit's newly acquired territories of Bāhirband and Bhitarband (covering the entire right bank of the Brahmaputra between Patlādā and Dhubri). This was achieved by Mirzā Nāthan after a brief campaign.

The fort of Dhubri was reputed to be the strongest of the forts in the entire Kuch region, and its siege dragged on for three months and a half. Finally, one morning, the Mughal artillery commenced a heavy fire simultaneously from the main battery and the three smaller ones, and kept the garrison busy, while the *beldārs* (sappers and miners) took advantage of the enemy's preoccupation to proceed under the shelter of the nearest earthen mound, across the surrounding moats, to the base of the inner wall of the fort and make a breach there wide enough for an elephant to pass through. By midday, this was completed, and through this opening, the Mughal infantry from the four erections rushed into the fort, with their war elephants in front, putting the garrison to flight to Gilāh (Gilāhjhār, on the western bank of the Gadādhar, about ten miles north of Dhubri), the fortified residence of Parikshit. Fath Khan Sālka, the commandant of Dhubri fort, however, out of affection for his son taken captive, surrendered to the Mughals, (*c.* middle of April, 1613).

The moral effect of this defeat was tremendous; Raja Parikshit lost confidence in himself, gave up further resistance, and became eager for peace. On a promise of being allowed to retain his personal

liberty and his kingdom, he agreed to acknowledge the imperial overlordship, and sought to appease the victors with rich presents, including a sum of 80,000 rupees for Shaikh Kamāl, and a large amount of money, elephants, and *tāngan* ponies for the Emperor and the Bengal viceroy, with his daughter and sister respectively for the last two dignitaries. Parikshit also promised to release Raghunāth's family. The Mughal commander accepted the terms. But the Viceroy at Dacca proved inexorable. He sternly rejected the peace offer, and demanded the surrender of Parikshit's person as well as of his kingdom.

Hostilities were therefore resumed. Raja Lakshmi Nārāyan of Kuch Bihar, who had already tendered submission to Islām Khan at Ghorāghāt in 1609 and promised to aid him in his campaign against Parikshit, now fulfilled his promise and attacked the parganah of Khonthāghāt on the western border of Kāmrup. Parikshit marched from Gilāh to oppose him and fought him so hard for seven days that the Kuch king had to appeal for help. An adequate force, with 200 war-boats, was sent under the command of Raja Satrajit to take Raja Parikshit by the rear. Satrajit marched to Kharbozāghāt (in Mechpārā mauza, Dt. Goālpārā), south of the Brahmaputra, and on his close approach, Parikshit gave up the fight with Lakshmi Nārāyan and withdrew to Gilāh.

The imperialists then decided to attack Gilāh, and sent Bahādur Ghāzi and Sonā Ghāzi, with 400 musketeers and 250 war-boats, up the river Gadādhar to make a fort at a convenient point in front of Gilāh so as to prevent the transport of rations to Parikshit's capital. The vassal zamindars achieved their task. Threatened with starvation, the Kāmrup king decided on a desperate night attack, by land and water, on the imperialists in Dhubri fort. He directed his son-in-law, the Dimāruā Raja, with his entire fleet of 700 *bachāri* boats, and 50 elephants, to seize the imperial post on the Gadādhar river, and then to join him in the assault on Dhubri, whither he himself marched at dusk with his entire land force. The combined assault was only partially successful. The Dimāruā Raja finished his task pretty well. He completely overpowered the tiny garrison in the fort on the Gadādhar, and captured almost the entire fleet of the zamindars, Bahādur Ghāzi and Sonā Ghāzi escaping with only 43 war-boats. The victor then moved down to Dhubri. He reached there before dawn only to find that the land army had not yet arrived, owing to unforeseen mishaps on the way.

The Kāmrup king, to make the best of a bad business, at once attacked the fort, while his son-in-law led an assault on the imperial fleet. The Kāmrup army easily defeated a division of Afghan and

Rajput forces led by Jamāl Khan Mankāli and Lachmi Rajput respectively, wounding both the commanders, and then advanced towards the second small erection which was gallantly defended by the Afghan archers of 'Usmān, who were soon reinforced by some imperial troops. To overcome their resistance, Nitāi, who was the standard-bearer of the Kāmrup king, rushed with four or five thousand Kandi archers, and was on the point of overpowering them, when his elephant, struck by an arrow, suddenly ran away, dropping him down. Though Nitāi narrowly escaped capture, this accident caused confusion in his ranks, and his soldiers retreated. Raja Parikshit rallied his forces and came to the field. A fierce engagement followed in the intense heat of the sun. Parikshit made three attempts to recapture the fort, but was repulsed each time. Indecisive warfare, however, went on all day long.

The Kāmrup fleet, under the Dimāruā Raja, gained more solid success in the naval battle. The fleet of the zamindārs, alarmed at the disastrous defeat of the previous night, failed to make a stand, while the imperial war-boats also were about to be overpowered. At this critical moment a cannon ball struck the Dimāruā Raja in in the breast and he was killed. This accident totally paralysed the Kāmrup navy, and it hastily withdrew. Hostilities were suspended for the night; the Kāmrup king decided to give up fighting altogether and fled hastily, after midnight, to Gilāh, leaving behind all his war-equipment, particularly cannon, with the whole army following him in utter confusion.

Once again fate favoured the Mughals, and they gained an unexpected victory. They pursued the fugitive to Gilāh, but before they reached it, they learnt that Parikshit had evacuated that city and fled towards Baranagar, his capital, which stood on the Manās (a stream which rises in the Bhutan hills, and, after a winding course, joins the Brahmaputra opposite Goālpārā). The victors occupied Gilāh and seized an immense booty, and next marched to the left bank of the Little Sankos (a stream joining the Gadādhar 2 or 3 miles above Dhubri), where Raja Lakshmi Nārāyan met them. In this way, the land army continued their relentless pursuit of Parikshit for 6 days, while the fleet, under Mirzā Qāsim Khazānchi and Raja Satrajit, moved along the Brahmaputra to intercept his passage of the Manās. Worn out in body and mind by his precipitate flight, the Kāmrup king at last decided on an almost unconditional surrender. He appealed to the imperial commanders, Mukarram Khan and Shaikh Kamāl, to spare his life and personal liberty, and surrendered all his belongings, his war-elephants, and his kingdom (*c.* end of July, 1613). Kāmrup thus lost its short

existence as a separate State and was annexed to the Mughal Empire.[1] But when the successful imperial commanders in their return journey reached Tok, they learnt the news of Islām Khan's sudden illness in the course of hunting in the forests of Bhāwāl, and they hastened to Bhāwāl only to find that the viceroy had already died (21st August, 1613).

The death of Islām Khan meant the disappearance of a dynamic personality who for five years had dominated the arena of Bengal politics, waging unrelenting warfare against the zamindārs, reducing them to subjection, or suppressing them altogether and annexing their kingdoms. It was Islām Khan who really conquered Bengal, organised a unified administrative system, and established the Mughal peace in the country. From this standpoint, he should be regarded as one of the makers of the Mughal Empire, and the greatest viceroy of the Bengal subah.

[1] *Baharistan*, 105b-118b: *Padishahnamah*, Vol. II. 64-67: *Purana Asama Buranji*, 199.

CHAPTER XVI.

TWENTY YEARS OF STAGNATION AND REVERSE, 1613—1633.

I. Qāsim Khan's incompetence and wrong acts.

Islām Khan was succeeded as governor of Bengal by his younger brother, Qāsim Khan, who was then in charge of Mungir. Though the new governor was appointed about the middle of September, 1613, (in the month of Sha'bān, 1022 A. H. *Iqbālnāmah,* 72), he did not actually take charge of his office at Jahāngirnagar till the 6th May, 1614, (27th Rabi-ul-Awwal, 1022 A. H., *Baharistan,* 145b) *i. e.* about eight months later, and Shaikh Hushang, son of Islām Khan, Mirzā Husain Beg, diwān, and Khwāja Tāhir Muhammad Bakhshi, with the concurrence of Āqā Yaghmā, the newswriter, jointly carried on the government during this interregnum.

Qāsim Khan preseneted a striking contrast to his great brother in almost every way. He did not possess the ability, energy, honesty and diligence of the latter, nor his coolness of judgement and resourcefulness. On the other hand, he displayed to an excess the autocratic instincts, violence of temper, arrogance, and nepotism of Islām Khan, adding to these, a lack of dignity, decorum, and tact, and a covetousness all his own. Perhaps the most fatal defect of his character was his quarrelsome spirit, as a result of which he lost the sympathy, advice, and co-operation of all the experienced officers in Bengal and he had to depend on his own favourites, very few of whom were experienced or efficient. Consequently the period of Qāsim Khan's rule, lasting for about three years (May, 1614-April, 1617), proved to be singularly barren. Internal disputes and revolts, especially, in the newly acquired territory of Kāmrup, engrossed the governor's attention, while the two principal expeditions that were sent,—one against the king of Assam and the other against the king of Arakan, ended in disastrous failure.

The first important event of Qāsim Khan's rule was his quarrel with Mirzā Husain Beg, the diwān, The latter had during the last interregnum exercised some viceregal functions and also enjoyed some rights and privileges of the kotwāl of the capital city, and when the new kotwāl appointed by Qāsim Khan took charge, disputes arose between the kotwāl and the diwān which culminated in a fray in which a few of the governor's men were wounded and killed at the

hands of the sons of the diwān. Qāsim Khan made it a personal affair, and imprisoned the diwān along with his sons, and though they were subsequently released through the intervention of some of the officers, the entire property of the diwān was confiscated. Jahāngir deputed a trusty officer named S'ādat Khan to investigate the whole affair. When the guilt of Qāsim Khan was established, he was compelled to restore all the property of the diwān and also to pay him a compensation of 100,000 rupees.

Another action of the new governor proved to be equally indiscreet, and probably caused greater harm to the government. It was the act of depriving Lakshmi Nārāyan and Parikshit Nārāyan, the kings of Kuch Bihār and Kāmrup respectively, of their personal liberty and of putting them under close surveillance, in clear contravention of the solemn pledge given to them by his predecessor and himself. Later on, both the Kuch kings were put to further humiliation when they were removed from Jahāngirnagar and practically exiled to the distant court of the Emperor. A formidable revolt broke out in Kuch Bihār and Kāmrup as a protest against this action, which shook the newly established Mughal authority in the north-eastern frontier to its very foundations, and which was quelled with great difficulty.

Another censure was in store for Qāsim Khan. The latter had not only alienated the diwān but also the bakhshi and wāq'a-navis, and all the three combined to complain against the governor. The Emperor now sent a very responsible officer named Ibrāhim Kalāl, entitled Ihtimām Khan, in order to settle matters, and also to realise from Qāsim Khan all the properties of Islām Khan, along with the revenue of the crownlands, which he had appropriated.

II. Kāchār campaign fails

The first important campaign of Qāsim Khan's government was directed against the people living near the south-western border of the kingdom of the Raja of Kachār, adjoining the frontier fort of Pratāpgarh (c. November, 1614). According to the *Baharistan*, these people living in the tract between the Khāsiās (rather the Jaintiās) and the Kachāris and speaking the Kachāri language, differed widely from them in their features, and manners and customs and claimed to be Mughals, being the descendants of the soldiers left in charge of his conquests by Timur, who had in the course of time migrated to this part of the country. Mubāriz Khan, who held charge of the thānah of Bindāsil on the eastern

border of Sylhet, marched towards the south-west and attacked the self-styled Mughals, and, after severe fighting, succeeded in subduing them and occupying a part of their territory.

Qāsim Khan was gratified at the success of Mubāriz Khan and exhorted him to lead an expedition to Kachār, the king of which had evidently shaken off his allegiance during the late interregnum. Mubāriz Khan soon returned to Sylhet, whence he proceeded to invade Kachār, in company of Mirak Bahādur Jalāir,

The Mughal commander who had accompanied Shaikh Kamāl and taken a prominent part in the first invasion more than two years before (*c.* April—May, 1612), followed the same plan of attacking first the south-western frontier fort of Pratāpgarh, adjoining Sylhet, and next falling upon the fort of Asurātekar on the north-western border.

The Kachār king Satrudaman offered as strong a resistance as he had done last time, causing a heavy loss of men by his repeated night attacks. But Mubāriz Khan's persistence at last bore fruit, and the fort of Pratāpgarh was stormed. The Mughal commander followed up his victory by proceeding north-east and attacking the fort of Asurātekar. As it could not be taken by assault, it was subjected to a close siege. Unable to bear the privations of the siege, the Kachār king again sued for peace, offering more favourable terms than he had done before. He gave up the fort of Asurātekar, reaffirmed his allegiance to the Emperor, offering him 40 elephants and a tribute of 100,000 rupees in cash. and prayed for exemption from personal attendance at the court. He also sent presents for the subāhdar and the Mughal commander. These terms were accepted by Qāsim Khan. Unfortunately Mubāriz Khan suddenly died, and, at this occurrence, Mirak Bahādur "became utterly confused and lost all courage", and hastily evacuated the thānah of Asurātekar and the country and withdrew to Sylhet. Qāsim Khan punished Mirak Bahādur by replacing him by a really competent and experienced officer named Mukarram Khan who had conquered Kāmrup (*Baharistan,* 165a-166a). Thus the Kachār campaign ended in failure, and the Kachār king who easily regained his independence, appears to have maintained it for a pretty long time.

The next important event was a punitive campaign against Bir Hamir, Shams Khan, Bahādur Khan, (who was the nephew and successor of Salim Khan), and Birbhān, the zamindārs of Birbhum, Pachet, Hijli, and Chandrakonā (about 22 miles north of Midnapore town) respectively. These vassals who had not rendered personal service but had continued to be loyal in the time of Islām Khan,

apparently fell off from their vassalage taking advantage of the weakness and lack of vigilance displayed by the new governor, and it became necessary to force them again into submission. Though the expedition directed against Bir Hamir and Shams Khan was conducted by an experienced officer, Shaikh Kamāl, it was not adequately equipped owing to Qāsim Khan's personal antipathy against the Shaikh, and so it does not appear to have led to any tangible result. The task of reducing Bahādur Khan and Birbhān, which was entrusted to Mirzā Makki, son of Iftikhār Khan, the faujdār of Burdwan, also was not achieved satisfactorily. For the governor, instead of encouraging co-ordinated action between Shaikh Kamāl and Mirzā Makki, seems to have discouraged it in order to discredit the Shaikh (*Baharistan*, 166a-166b).

III. Arakanese invasions of Bhuluā, 1614-1615

Soon after this, Qāsim Khan had to face the first and the most formidable foreign invasion of his rule. It was a combined attack on the frontier thānah of Bhuluā by Meng Khamaung (Husain Shah) the king of Arakan, and the Portuguese freebooter, Sebastian Gonzales, the master of Sondip, who had for a time composed their mutual differences in order to fight their common enemy.

With an army of 80,000 infantry (most of whom were musketeers, only 10,000 being *paiks*, with swords and shields, according to Bocarro, and 300,000 in all according to the *Baharistan*), and 700 war-elephants, the Arakan king marched from Chittagong towards Bhuluā on land, while he sent his large fleet consisting of *ghurābs* (floating batteries), *Jaliyās, Kusās, Machuās* etc. (150 *Jaliyās* and 50 big war-boats, and 4000 expert sailors, according to Bocarro) to join the fleet of Sebastian Gonzales.

The moment was very opportune. 'Abdul Wāhid, the thānahdār of Bhuluā, had gone to Jahāngirnagar to see the governor, while his son had proceeded towards the north-east to attack the territory of Tipperah, and Bhuluā was practically without any defence. Qāsim Khan was at last roused to action. He encamped at Khizrpur and prepared to transport the army across the Meghnā and other rivers by means of cargo boats, and at the same time summoned the thānahdārs to assemble their forces. 'Abdul Wāhid the feeble-hearted thānahdār, at the news of the approach of the enemy, inspite of the protest of his valiant son, not only evacuated Bhuluā without fighting but retreated north towards the Dākātiā river. Though pressed by Qāsim Khan to make a stand at that strategic point, 'Abdul Wāhid decided to withdrew still further into the

narrow waters of the Māchwā-khāl to be out of reach of the big war-boats of the enemy.

This left the Arakan king and his Feringi ally masters of the situation. While the land force crossed the Big Feni and the Little Feni rivers and occupied Bhuluā, and plundered and looted the inland territories with impunity, and then marched northwards in pursuit of the thānahdār, the Feringis, with their war-boats, proceeded up the Meghnā to the Dākātiā river, carrying on similar depredations on the territories lying on the banks.

At this critical moment when all seemed to be lost, an unforeseen event occurred which turned the tide in favour of the Mughals. The alliance of the Arakan king with his traditional enemy, the Feringis, was too unreal to be lasting, and it broke off in the middle of the war, owing to an act of treachery on the part of the Maghs (according to the *Baharistan*, but on the part of the Feringis according to Bocarro). As the Arakan king had never been able to cope with the Feringi fleet, he now imprisoned the nephew of the Feringi admiral, Antonio Carvalho, and a few other noted officers who were fighting on land in his company, with a view to coercing Carvalho and his associates into submission.

But the plan of the Arakan king did not succeed. At the news of the capture of his comrades, Antonio Carvalho took severe reprisals. He looted and plundered the Arakan fleet in his charge, captured its admiral and other officers, seized all the artillery and treasures, and retired to Sondip, leaving the Arakan king to shift for himself. The Mughal commander 'Abdul Wāhid did not fail to take advantage of the miserable plight of the Arakanese. He was heartened by the arrival of the advance force under Shaikh Farid as well as the forces under Shaikh Kamāl and Mirzā Makki, to recross the Dākātiā river and fall upon the Arakanese land force. The latter were totally unprepared for this counter-attack. The Arakan king retreated hastily across the two Feni rivers to Chittagong, hotly chased by the victors and leaving behind him a number of his elephants and troops.

Thus the first serious attack of the Arakan king on Bengal ended in disastrous failure (*c.* December, 1614). That the Mughals came unscathed out of this great ordeal was solely due to an act of Providence. The subahdār sent a false report to court ascribing the defeat of the enemy to his son Shaikh Farid, for which he was censured by a farman.[1]

[1] *Baharistan*, 166b-169a: A Bocarro—*Decada* 13 *da Historia da India*, parte 2, pp. 440-444; Phyare—*History of Burma*, p. 175; Stewart, *History of Bengal*,

The repeated reprimands did not prove effective, and the Emperor at last made a new experiment. He decided to send a new diwān who would be nearly of the same rank as the subahdār, so that he would not prove subservient to him, and would, on the other hand, check his actions. Further, the new diwān would be allowed a free hand in the selection of the bakhshi and waqia'-navis, so that the trio would act as a counterpoise to the subahdār. Mukhlis Khan, one of the confidential servants of the court, was accordingly appointed diwān and sent to Bengal (*Baharistan*, 183a-183b : *Tuzuk* R. B. I. 306), about the middle of December, 1615.

Soon after this change in the personnel of the government, the Arakan king, Meng Khamaung, made a second attack on Bengal. He had so long been busy combating an attack made on him by the Portuguese viceroy of Goa at the suggestion, and with the co-operation, of the Portuguese freebooter Sebastian Gonzales. But Gonzales did not arrive in time, and the Portuguese fleet, acting singly, failed in its attack on the Arakan capital, and its admiral was killed. The Portuguese flotilla retired in disgrace to Goa, while Gonzales returned sullenly to Sondip (*c.* Oct., 1615). Freed from the Portuguese menace, the Arakan king appears to have patched up a truce with his great enemy, the Burmese king, Mahā Dhamma Rāja (Anankpetlum, 1605-28), in regard to the dispute concerning the cession of some border islands, and utilised the respite in renewing his attack on the Mughal frontier tract of Bhuluā. (Phyare, *History of Burma*, pp. 176-77 : Harvey, *History of Burma* p. 189).

The Mughal faujdar 'Abdul Wāhid (now entitled Sarhad Khan) again evacuated Bhuluā with his family and took refuge in the Dākātiā river, without waiting for the reinforements despatched by the viceroy, who had taken post at Khizrpur. Once more the Arakan king occupied the whole of Bhuluā unopposed and began a relentless pursuit of the retiring imperialists. But Mirzā Nur-ud-din (the son of 'Abdul Wāhid) and some other brave officers, turned

137-38: Campos, *History of the Portuguese in Bengal*, 87. Sir Jadunath Sarkar, *Prabasi*, 1329, Falgun, 665-67. As Sir Jadunath has pointed out, there is some difference in the accounts of Mirzā Nathan and Bocarro, particularly regarding the treachery amongst the invaders. According to Bocarro, Gonzales took part in the attack and treacherously murdered the Arakanese naval officers after calling them to a consultation in his boat. But according to Mirzā Nathan, Antonio Carvalho, brother of Gonzales, led the Feringis, and the Arakan king first murdered the Feringi officers in his company. Though Nathan did not take part in the war, his account is more detailed and is generally confirmed by Bocarro, and so it seems to be preferable.

at bay and delivered a desperate cavalry charge upon the pursuing enemy. Fate once again came to the rescue of the Mughals. It so happened that there was a large bog near the place chosen for this sudden counter-attack, and the victorious Arakanese, taken by surprise, were herded precipitately into that bog. Though a small section of them managed to cross it without any loss, the Arakan king and his nephew, with their elephants and the rest of their troops, got stuck up in the bog and were easily surrounded by the Mughals. In the confusion that followed, a good many of the Arakanese were killed or captured, and the Arakan king was forced to sue for an ignominious peace. He appealed to the Mughal commander to spare his personal liberty, and in return for this favour, he agreed to surrender all his officers, including his nephew, and also his men and elephants and other equipments.

The Mughal commander agreed to these terms, and the Arakan king was allowed to escape almost alone at night to Chittagong. In the morning, 'Abdul Wāhid gathered all the officers and men and the war-equipments left by the fugitive king, and returned triumphantly to Bhuluā (*c.* early in January, 1616).[1]

IV. The Assam War, 1615,—Disaster

The conquest of Kāmrup had at last brought the Mughal Government into direct contact with the Ahom kingdom. The main factor which led to the first war between them was the political ambition of Qāsim Khan to carry his brother's forward policy in the north-eastern frontier a step further by the conquest of Assam. Though the political issue was predominant, it was complicated by boundary quarrels and trade disputes as suggested by the Ahom and Assamese chronicles. The Mughal boundary in Kāmrup did not extend east of the Bar Nadi, but the Mughals appear to have often penetrated much further, even as far east as Tejpur, inspite of the protests of the Ahom frontier officers. Further the rich natural resources of Assam, ivory, musk, aloe wood, silk, etc., encouraged much illegal trade, particularly smuggling, which embittered the feelings of both parties and precipitated the war.

Sayyid Ābā Baqr, the most faithful of Qāsim Khan's officers,

[1] *Baharistan*, 185a-186b. Though the Portuguese chroniclers and the Arakanese annals are silent on this point, there is no reason for disbelieving Mirzā Nathan, who offers a detailed account of the event. The *Tuzuk* is practically silent regarding these Magh raids, and in only one passage vaguely alludes to them (R & B. I. p 300).

was selected commander, and a force of about 10 to 12 thousand cavalry and infantry, 2000 musketeers, and a fleet of 400 boats in which the war-boats of the vassal Bengal zamindārs predominated, was assembled. Ābā Baqr marched towards Barnagar, the old capital of Kāmrup, and next moved to Hājo, the new headquarters, and established thānahs in the surrounding region. He decided to spend the rains, June—September 1615, at Hājo and reported his activities to Qāsim Khan.

The Bengal governor now displayed his habitual impatience and shortsightedness, and pressed Ābā Baqr to proceed forward even during the rains. The latter was compelled to march to Kohhātā (a frontier town on the Bar Nadi, midway between Srighāt and Pāndu, probably the same place as modern Kulhāti near the Chenchā hills between Hājo and Kājali), whence he could not move further owing to heavy rains. The place was extremely unhealthy, and sickness carried away a large number of his men during this enforced halt. About the middle of November, 1615, Sayyid Ābā Baqr, with his ranks much depleted, began the war by a sudden attack on Kājali, the Ahom frontier post on the south-west, which he easily took, capturing a large number of war-boats. The Mughals followed up their success by a series of plundering raids into the interior.

These aggressions enraged the Ahom king, and he made earnest efforts to check the further progress of the invaders. He strengthened the defences of his next important stronghold of Samdhārā, at the confluence of the Bharali and the Brahmaputra. He sent his chief officers, the Hāti Baruā, Rājkhawā, and Khārghukā (Khārghariā) Phukan with a large force to hold Samdhārā; Ābā Baqr encamped opposite Samdhārā. He chose a sandy piece of ground for his entrenchments, and did not take the trouble of clearing the jungles around them. He underestimated the strength of the enemy and passed his time in negligence and indolence. His arrogance and haughtiness completely alienated his subordinates. The Ahoms readily took advantage of the blunders of the Mughal commander and prepared for a night attack. At the end of a wintry night (c. middle of January, 1616), three bridges of boats were speedily thrown across the river Bharali, over which the Ahom army 300,000 strong, with 700 war elephants, fell upon the unsuspecting Mughals and easily overpowered them. The Mughal fortified camp was stormed, its arsenal destroyed, its elephants seized, and a large number of officers, including Sayyid Hakim, Sayyid Kāsu, Jamāl Khan Mankali, and Lachmi Rajput, and Sayyid Ābā Baqr, the commander, were killed.

The imperial fleet, particularly, the war-boats of the zamindārs fared no better. At first they made a bold stand and fought the Ahom fleet, but the news of the fall of Sayyid Ābā Baqr, and the capture of the fort so much unnerved them that they gave up further resistance and fell an easy prey to the enemy. Almost the whole of the fleet was captured. Of the naval officers, Mirān Sayyid Masa'ud, the imperial officer in charge of the zamindārs' war-boats, Sonā Ghāzi, and Raja Satrajit, alone narrowly escaped in their own boats, while Ilahdād Khan Dakhini, Rāja Rāy, and Narsing Rāy and others were all wounded and captured.

Thus the first aggressive war of Qāsim Khan on Assam ended in disaster. The losses in men and material were heavy, but heavier still was the moral loss—loss in military prestige and political power.[1]

V. Invasion of Chittagong fails

Undismayed by the disastrous failure of his Assam war, Qāsim Khan quickly launched on another aggressive expedition directed against the Rāja of Arakan, with Chittagong as the first objective. The governor himself advanced to Bhuluā, (February 1616), whence he despatched 'Abd-un-Nabi with a force of 5000 cavalry, 5000 musketeers, 200 war-elephants, and a fleet of 1000 war-boats, towards Chittagong.

The Arakan king, Meng Khamaung (Husain Shah), decided to check their advance by making a fort at a strategic point about 20 miles north-west of Chittagong named Kāthgar (a village south of Sitākund, and two miles off from the next railway station of Barabakund, B. A. Rly). He sent his chief officer, 'Karamkāri' (commandant or superintendent), with a force of 100,000 infantry, besides 400 elephants and 1000 war-boats, to complete the fort and hold it. He personally started from his capital Mrohaung (Mrauk-u) for the defence of his stronghold of Chittagong, with an army of 300,000 infantry and 10,000 cavalry, besides a large number of elephants and war-boats.

Informed by his spies that the new fort was not yet complete and that the garrison in the fort of Chittagong was also very small as the Arakan king had not yet reached it with his force, 'Abd-un-

[1] *Baharistan*, 163b, 171a, 174b-175a, 179a, 189a-191a: *Padishah Namah*, Vol. II, 67: Ahom *Buranji from Khunlung and Khunlai*, 521-27 *Purani Asama Buranji*, 80-88: Dr. Wade's *History of Assam*, 254-259. The *Baharistan* is, to a great extent, corroborated by the Ahom and Assamese chronicles. especially by the *Purani Asama Buranji.*

Nabi hastened to Kāthgar, leaving behind Sarhad Khan and Shaikh Kamāl to make a fort and hold it for the puspose of keeping up communication and food supply to the invading army, and delivered a vigorous assault on the unfinished fort in the early hours of the morning. The Arakanese were taken by surprise, and though they greeted the Mughals with a heavy shower of shells, bullets, arrows, bombs, and stones (from ballistas), the latter quickly overcame the resistance and pressed the garrison so hard that the fall of the fort seemed imminent. At this stage, the Mughal commander, owing to his want of experience and judgement, was easily induced by some of his officers to suspend hostilities for the day, and this single mistake turned the tide of the whole war.

While the attack was resumed next morning, the position was entirely changed. The garrison had fully recovered from the shock of the sudden assault and offered such a determined resistance that the idea of storming the fort had to be abandoned, and a siege was decided on. But the siege operations dragged on and the besiegers themselves were soon reduced to the position of the besieged as a result of the activity of the commandant of the enemy fort. At the threat to the food supply of the main army, the Mughal commander raised the siege and retreated towards Jahāngirnagar, leaving behind his heavy artillery and destroying about 500 maunds of gunpowder (*c.* May, 1616).

Thus the invasion of Arakan also proved a complete failure. The unrelieved succession of reverses at last proved too much for Jahāngir's love of his utterly incompetent foster-brother. Qāsim Khan was recalled and a new governor, Ibrāhim Khan, sent to Bengal. But, alas, already the grand work of Islām Khan had been undone by his brother. Qāsim Khan did not succeed even in maintaining internal order. There was chronic rebellion in Kāmrup with which his favourite officer 'Abdul Bāqi could not cope, and most of the punitive expeditions against the rebel zamindars in Bengal also failed in their object.

VI. Ibrāhim Khan Fath-i-Jang governor: conciliatory policy, good administration, peace and prosperity

The next subahdār of Bengal, Ibrāhim Khan Fath-i-Jang took charge at Jahāngirnagar at the beginning of November, 1617 after having been delayed about seven months since his appointment by the retiring governor. Indeed a fight between the old and the new governor had once seemed imminent near Jātrāpur, but mediators

averted the conflict. The new governor was the brother of Queen Nur Jahān and enjoyed the confidence and trust of the Emperor. He had held important posts, including those of Paymaster of the Royal household and governor of Bihār, and had already evinced his administrative ability and military talents. In Bihār he had conquered the tract of Khokharā and acquired valuable diamond mines there, for which his *mansab* was increased and he was exalted with the title of Fath-i-Jang.

His character offers a pleasant contrast to that of his predecessors, Islām Khan and Qāsim Khan. He was free from the vices of both, while he possessed the ability, energy, discretion, and resourcefulness of Islām Khan, and added to these some noble traits unknown to him and to his brother, an honesty of purpose, a mastery of temper, a spirit of moderation, conciliation, and compromise, and, above all, an innate nobility of character and dignity of bearing, which endeared him to friends and foes alike.

The period of Ibrāhim Khan's rule, lasting practically for about six years (from November, 1617, to November, 1623) is marked by a peace and tranquillity unknown before. Though he had to face more than one attack of the Ahom king and his protege Bali Nārāyan, brother of the ex-king Parikshit Nārāyan, on the newly acquired territory of Kāmrup, Bengal as a whole, remained free from any serious invasion from without and revolt from within till the advent of the rebel prince Shah Jahān in November 1623. The Arakan Raja, of course, led more than one raid into south-eastern Bengal, and the Feringi pirates too raided Jessore, but these incursions proved to be no more than passing evils, and did not involve any serious challenge to the Mughal government. Ibrāhim Khan organised only two expeditions, one against Tipperah and the other against Arakan, both of short duration. In regard to internal administration, he initiated a new policy of political conciliation and release of political prisoners which had a beneficent effect. It promoted peace, security, and good government.

For the first time since the Mughal conquest, Bengal now settled down to enjoy the blessings of the Mughal peace. Agriculture and commerce were encouraged, and the manufactures were carried to a degree of perfection they had never attained before. The delicate muslins of Dacca and the silks of Maldah constituted the chief part of the dress of the imperial court, and these industries received an impetus unknown before. Bengal had every prospect of enjoying an undisturbed state of felicity. But the rebellion of Shah Jahān and his march into Bengal broke the short spell of peace and made it again the scene of bitter strife and bloody warfare.

During the interval between Ibrāhim Khan's formal appointment and his actual assumption of office at Jahāngirnagar, two important events occurred. One was a successful punitive campaign led by Mirzā Makki, entitled Maruwwat Khan, warden of the pass of Garhi and faujdār of Akbarnagar and Burdwan, against Bir Bhān, zamindar of Chandrakonā. The latter had been causing great annoyance to travellers passing by his territories, and the Emperor ordered that he must be suppressed (October, 1617. *Tuzuk*, R & B. I 392 and footnote 2).

The second event occured in Kamrup. Shaikh Ibrāhim, collector (*krori*) of Kamrup, had misappropriated a sum of rupees seven lakhs out of the State dues, and, to escape punishment, entered into a treacherous pact with the Ahom king, and soon openly revolted. Mirzā Nathan tried to suppress the rebel, but he did not succeed, and the operations dragged on until Ibrāhim Khan arrived and quelled the revolt.

Next followed more serious troubles created by Raja Bali Nārāyan, backed by his suzerain, the Ahom king. Bali Nārāyan suddenly captured Pāndu, and proceeded to attack Hājo, the capital of Kamrup (*c.* January—February, 1618). Though the enemy owing to his superior numbers, at first prevailed over the imperialists, he was ultimately driven back with great loss.

The governor now felt free to initiate his new administrative policy. He had already represented to the Emperor that the sons of Raja Pratāpāditya of Jessore who had been sent to Court during the time of Islām Khan, and Kuch Rajas Lakshmi Nārāyan and Parikshit Nārāyan who had been sent thither by Qāsim Khan, should all be released and sent back to Bengal, as this act of clemency was likely to ease the political situation. His recommendations were now accepted. He adopted a similar conciliatory policy with regard to the prominent zamindars, headed by Musā Khan, who had been kept under surveillance at Jahāngirnagar, since the days of Islām Khan. All these persons were released from confinement and restored to liberty. (*c.* middle of March, 1618). The beneficent effects of this policy of political clemency were soon felt. Raja Lakshmi Nārāyan, restored to his kingdom, rendered valuable services to the Mughal government in Kāmrup till his death, while Musā Khan displayed similar faithfulness and loyalty in serving the Bengal government, distinguishing himself especially in the conquest of Tipperah.

About the middle of March, 1618, Madhusudan, a nephew of Raja Lakshmi Nārāyan, and one of the younger brothers of Parikshit Nārāyan, suddenly revolted and seized the pargana of Karibāry, on the southwestern border of Kamrup. Musā Khan suppressed the

revolt and brought Madhusudan to terms. In pursuance of his liberal policy, the subahdār treated the new vassal kindly, and secured his services for the government of Kamrup.

VII. Conquest of Tipperah, 1618

The next important event of Ibrāhim Khan's rule was the conquest of Tipperah. He had been definitely commanded by the Emperor to subdue the king of Arakan, and the conquest of Tipperah was accomplished by him as a preliminary step in that direction. The moment was opportune. The reigning Tipperah king Jasomānikya, was known to be a devout Vaishnava, and, as such, averse to warfare, and was not expected to offer much resistance.

The Viceroy made elaborate preparations and also settled the plan of campaign. The land army was organised in two divisions, one of which, under the command of Mirzā Isfandiyār, was to attack the Tipperah kingdom by way of Kāliāgarh on the north-west (near modern Kasba and Kamalāsāgar, in the Brahmanbaria subdivision of the Comilla District, about 26 miles north-west of Udaipur, measured in a straight line), while the second division, under the command of Mirzā Nur-ud-din and Musā Khan, was to proceed eastwards towards Udaipur, the capital, by way of Meherkul (close to modern Comilla town, which is about 19 miles due west of Udaipur), while the fleet under the charge of the admiral Bahādur Khan, was to remain in the middle and proceed up the river Gumti by way of Comilla towards the enemy capital which stood on the river. The Tipperah king decided to fight the army divisions separately and first turned against Mirzā Isfandiyār who had made the greatest advance, across the hills of Kāliāgarh, towards Udaipur. Though the Tipperah force was far superior in number, its equipment and organisation were inferior to those of the Mughals, and it formed an easy target to the expert Mughal musketeers and artillery. An obstinate engagement followed in which a large number of men were wounded and killed. Finally the Tipperah king was defeated and compelled to retreat to Udaipur with heavy loss, including 70 war elephants.

Meanwhile the second Mughal division under Mirzā Nur-ud-din and Musā Khan had been proceeding leisurely and rather carelessly. The Tipperah king suddenly came across this division, as he was falling back on Udaipur after his defeat at the hands of Mirzā Isfandiyār, and made a desperate attack. But he was again defeated, and hastily withdrew.

Defeated in successive engagements on land, the Tipperah king now turned to his fleet, with which he attempted to prevent the advance of the imperial navy upon Udaipur. But inspite of the best efforts of the Tipperah fleet, the advance of the imperial navy could not be stopped, and this was soon followed by the triumphant march of the two land divisions into the enemy capital.

The fall of the capital ended the campaign. The Raja while trying to flee to Arakan was hotly pursued by the Mughals and captured with his family and personal effects, including jewels and other rich treasures. Udaipur was made the seat of a thānah and placed in charge of Mirzā Nurullah, and the Mughal commanders then went back to the subahdār with all the captured elephants and the royal captive (*c.* end of November, 1618).[1]

For about two years after the conquest of Tipperah (*c.* November 1618, October, 1620), peace and tranquillity reigned in Bengal, and towards the end of that period, Ibrāhim Khan, attracted by the report of the wholesome climate and natural beauty of Tipperah, paid a visit to that country.

VIII. Fight with the Arakanese ; Hijli revolt crushed

But during the same period, Kāmrup suffered a good deal from the incursions of Bali Nārāyan. Aided by Shumāru Purkāyeth and the numerous hill chieftains of Dakhinkol (the region south of the Brahmaputra, included in the modern Goalpara and Kāmrup Districts), and backed by the enormous resources of the Ahom king, Bali Nārāyan made more than one daring and organised effort to overthrow the imperial authority in Kāmrup, but Ibrāhim Khan succeeded in frustrating his designs and suppressing all the rebel elements.

Soon after his return from the pleasure-trip to Tipperah, Ibrāhim Khan had to meet an attack of the Arakan king Meng Khamaung (Husain Shah). The latter had in the meantime strengthened his position by conquering Sondip from Sebastian Gonzales (who hence-

[1] *Baharistan*, 231a, 240a-b, 246b-247a : *Rajamala*, metrical version, Chandroday Vidyavinode, 243-248 : N. K. Bhattashali, on Tipperah Raja Jasomanikya. (*Bharatbarsha*, Ashar, 1342, 32-39, As Dr. Bhattashali has pointed out, the account of the *Baharistan* is remarkably corroborated by the *Rajamala*. As regards the date of the conquest of Tipperah, Dr. Bhattashali has suggested 1621 A. D. The *Baharistan* does not give any date of this event, but from the sequence of events, some of which are dated, both before and after this episode, it seems clear that the Tipperah war took place in the winter of 1618 and not in 1621.

forward passed into obscurity). With a large fleet composed of 700 *ghurābs* (floating batteries), and 4000 *Jaliyā* boats, the Arakan king had suddenly fallen upon the villages skirting the river Megnā, plundered them with impunity, and reached as far as the island of Bāghchār threatening the capital Dacca.

As soon as the news of the raids reached Ibrāhim Khan at night, he hastily collected the war-boats near at hand, (only 32 in number), and started for the scene at the last watch of the night, reaching the vicinity of the enemy camp next morning, with a small personal following, including his nephews Mirzā Ahmad Beg and Mirzā Yusuf, the rest of the mansabdārs and the Bengal zamindārs, including Musā Khan and Raja Raghunāth, joining him afterwards with the land force which included 7000/8000 cavalry, and the war-boats which now reached the total of 4000 to 5000.

The prompt and effective steps taken by the subahdār, and, especially, his personal courage and initiative, saved the situation. The Arakan king did not dare to proceed further, nor did he think it advisable to engage in a naval battle. He hastily retraced his steps, leaving 1000 *Jaliyā* boats for the protection of his frontier.[1] Ibrāhim Khan strengthened the fortifications of the frontier thanāhs and put additional garrisons in them, and also stationed a division of the fleet for the safety of the pargana of Phuldubi (in the Faridpur district), and then returned to Jahāngirnagar (October 1620).

A few months afterwards (sometime in March, 1621), Ibrāhim Khan launched his long-deferred Arakan campaign, with Chittagong as his objective, from the new base at Tipperah. The route was more direct no doubt, but it lay through a hilly region clad with dense forests, with a bad climate, and involving considerable difficulties in regard to transport and food supply. Ibrāhim Khan was ill-advised to adopt this new route, and the expedition failed, primarily because of this initial mistake in regard to the choice of route. Leaving the fleet in the Big Feni river the Viceroy proceeded with the land army slowly along the new route towards Chittagong, clearing the forests as he passed by. In some places the forest was so thick ('impassable for an ant') that even the horses and the elephants could not move without great difficulty. Scarcity of food and

[1] *Baharistan*, 271a. Apparently this raid of the Arakan king upto the vicinity of the Mughal capital, followed by a similar raid into the pargana of Dakhin Shahbazpur, Dt. Backergunge, magnified by the Arakanese chronicle into the 'conquest of the middle land' misled Phayre (*History of Burma*, 177) to suggest that Meng Khamaung 'extended his territory in Bengal by occupying a part of what is now the district of Bakirgunj, and for a time the city of Dacca.'

pestilence in his camp forced Ibrāhim Khan to withdraw, with the ranks much depleted and the morale of the army much shaken.[1]

The weakness of the Bengal Government encouraged the Arakanese to indulge in repeated and gradually more daring raids into Bengal.

Not long after the Arakan expedition, Ibrāhim Khan had to deal with an internal revolt which, for a time, assumed a formidable character. Bahādur Khan, zamindār of Hijli, emboldened by his friendship with Mukarram Khan who had been transferred from Bengal to the post of governor of Orissa, openly defied the authority of the governor of Bengal. The latter appointed Muhammad Beg Ābākash, who was related to him, faujdār of Burdwan, and directed him to proceed against Bahādur Khan. A fleet of 200 war-boats from Musā Khan was sent for his use. Meanwhile Bahādur Khan had strengthened his position with the armed help of 1000 cavalry from Mukarram Khan, and this enabled him to thwart all the efforts of the Mughal commander to subdue him or dislodge him from his fortified post of Hijli, which was afterwards besieged.

Before the revolt of Bahādur Khan could be quelled, news of repeated raids by the Feringi pirates on Jessore reached the subahdār. Suhrāb Khan, the local faujdār, was too much addicted to wine to take the necessary steps, so that the raiders used to appear almost daily and carry away, without any opposition, a large number of men and women as captives.

Ibrāhim Khan decided to take the field in person in order to deal with this double danger. His idea was first to proceed to Jessore by the shortest water route, and after the repulse of the Feringi pirates, to force Bahādur Khan into submission. But he missed his way in that labyrinth of channels and for five days wandered about in a region rendered desolate by the Feringi and Magh raids, in extreme misery and privation, till he chanced upon the right route and reached Kāgarghāta, three *kos* off Jessore towards Hijli.

At Jessore he reprimanded the negligent faujdār and strengthened his hands against future raids by placing a fleet of 60 war-boats at his disposal, and then sent a strong force under his nephew Mirzā Ahmed Beg against Bahādur of Hijli.

Unable to resist the combined attack, Bahādur Khan gave up hostilities and sued for peace. He personally came to Jessore to

[1] *Baharistan*, 272b: *Fathiya*, continuation, 176a, briefly alludes to this futile campaign, detailed in the *Baharistan*.

tender submission to the subahdār, who imposed a fine of Rs 300,000/- on him for his disloyalty, but reinstated him in his jāgir, (beginning of June, 1621).

During the rains (*c.* middle of August, 1621), the Arakan king made another raid, this time on some villages in Dakhin Shāhbāzpur, an island near the mouth of the Meghnā (now included in the Backergunge District). Ibrāhim Khan took immediate action. He started at midnight with a fleet of about 4000/5000 war-boats and reached Vikrampur early next morning. Towards the close of the day, news came that the Arakan king had hurriedly returned to meet an attack on his kingdom delivered by his enemy, the Raja of Burma. Thus the danger passed away. Ibrāhim Khan left his bakhshi, Mirzā Bāqi, with a fleet of 600 war-boats for cruising along the Meghnā river, and returned to Jahāngirnagar.

For more than two years after this event, (*c.* August, 1621, to November, 1623), Bengal enjoyed another spell of peace and quiet, though Kāmrup continued to suffer from periodic and isolated revolts which were duly suppressed by the local officers.

Some changes in the personnel of the Bengal officers and the nobility occurred during this period. About the beginning of March, 1623, Shaikh Kamāl one of the most experienced officers of the government (serving in Bengal since the beginning of Islām Khan's rule), died in harness in Kāmrup. Ibrāhim Khan assigned Shaikh Kamāl's jāgirs to his eldest son, Shaikh Shāh Muhammad, increased his rank, and sent him for service in Kāmrup. The other change was of greater political importance. Sometime in April, 1623, Musā Khan died as the result of a serious and long continued illness. Ibrāhim Khan chose his son Ma'sum Khan, a youth of 18 or 19, as his successor, and treated him with extreme kindness. Ibrāhim Khan also retained the services of the old officers of Musā Khan—Khwāja Chānd the minister, 'Ādil Khan the admiral, Ramāi Lashkar and Jānaki Vallabh, the commanders of the land army.

IX. Shah Jahan rebels, invades Bengal : Ibrahim Khan slain

Towards the end of 1622, prince Shah Jahān the ablest among the four sons of Emperor Jahāngir, rebelled in the Deccan against his father, mainly because his hopes of a peaceful succession were frustrated by the machinations of his ambitious and powerful step-mother, Nur Jahan. The rebel prince at first made an attempt to capture Agra, the capital, but he was defeated and driven back into

the Deccan, closely followed by the imperial general Mahābat Khan and prince Parvez. Unable to maintain his hold on the Deccan, Shah Jahan, decided to leave the country and create for himself a new centre of influence and authority.

This was found in Bengal, which, on account of its peculiar physical features, geographical isolation, rich natural resources, coupled with its chronic political confusion, had afforded a tempting field to many a daring adventurer and an asylum to many a political refugee. The internal situation at that moment seemed to be favourable to the rebel prince. Inspite of Ibrāhim Khan's generous treatment of Ma'sum Khan, this son and successor of Musā Khan proved to be a hot-headed and fickle youth, anxious to throw off the shackles of vassalage, and in fact he became an easy tool in the hands of Shah Jahân. The external situation also appeared to be inviting. The rebel prince could readily make an alliance with the king of Arakan in fighting their common enemy, the Mughal Emperor. The Portuguese settlers and officers in Bengal might be won over by a promise of trade facilities, while the services of Portuguese captains of war, with their war-boats, might also be utilised. So Shah Jahan decided to go to Bengal not only to recoup and replenish his resources, but also to secure fresh recruits, fresh allies, and a fresh base of operations for the final war.

In October, 1623, the rebel prince left Burhānpur, crossed the flooded Tāpti into Golconda, passed to the coast town of Masulipatam, whence he turned towards the north-east, and entered the Mughal province of Orissā, the whole journey covering nearly two months.

The Emperor had anticipated this change in the plan of the rebel prince, and in order to meet it had ordered prince Parvez and Mahābat Khan to hasten from Burhānpur towards Allahabad and Bihār in quest of Shah Jahān, and also sent *farmāns* to Mirzā Ahmad Beg Khan, nephew of Ibrāhim Khan, who had been appointed governor of Orissa, in place of Mukarram Khan early in June, 1621 (*Baharistan*, 273a, *Tuzuk*, R. &.B. II. 210), and Ibrāhim Khan, asking them to be on the alert and prevent the rebel prince from securing a foothold in Orissa and Bengal.

Ibrāhim Khan and Mirzā Ahmad Beg were placed in an embarrassing situation. It was a quarrel between the Emperor and a prince who had long been regarded as his heir-apparent, and in such a quarrel it was difficult for a mere servant to follow the right course of action. Though Ibrāhim Khan stuck to the side of the Emperor till his death, he failed to take effective and organised steps to check the progress of the rebel prince at the first opportune moment and allowed him to enter Midnapur and Burdwan practically

unopposed, leaving the local officers to shift for themselves. In fact, Ibrāhim Khan's surprising inaction was mainly responsible for Shah Jahān's almost triumphant entry into Akbarnagar. Mirzā Ahmad Beg fared worse than his uncle. As soon as he heard the news of Shah Jahān's arrival near the fort of Mānpur (between Telingānā and Orissa, *Akbarnāmah* Vol. III. 969), commanding the strategic ChatarDiwār Pass which could have been easily defended by a small contingent against a large army, the distracted governor gave up the campaign, hurried to Pipli, the seat of his government, collected his family, and then moved to Katak, whence he retreated to Burdwan, and finally halted at Akbarnagar. Owing to his singular cowardice and incompetence, Orissa passed into the hands of Shah Jahān without a blow.

Shah Jahān first marched to Khurdā, where he received the homage of Raja Purushottam Dev, and smaller zamindārs, and then proceeded to Katak for making necessary arrangements for the administration of the occupied area. Here he received a friendly mission from Miguel Rodrigues, the Portuguese governor of Hugli and Pipli, who presented various costly and rare gifts to him. From Katak Shah Jahan proceeded northwards to Midnapur still unopposed, whence a few stages of march brought him to the vicinity of Burdwan.

At Burdwan, Shah Jahan for the first time experienced opposition; the faujdār, Mirzā Sālih, a nephew of Āsaf Khan had rejected the overtures of Āhmad Beg to accompany him in his flight, and subsequently refused an offer of 'Abdullah Khan (Firuz Jang) to join the ranks of the rebel prince. He strengthened the defences of his fortified post and prepared for a gallant resistance. Unfortunately he could not keep up his spirits for a long time in the face of the close siege of the city by the officers of Shah Jahān, and was ultimately compelled to surrender. Burdwan was occupied and given as a fief to Bairam Beg, after which the rebel prince marched due north towards Akbarnagar or Rājmahal. After he had reached Akbarnagar, Ahmad Beg sent swift couriers to the Bengal governor at Jahāngirnagar informing him about the movements of the rebel prince and his own evil plight. Ibrāhim Khan was at last roused to action. He first made arrangements for the defence of the frontier posts, especially against the depredations of the Feringi and Arakanese raiders, by strengthening the garrisons in the new thānah of Fuldubi and other thānahs in Jessore, Bhuluā, Tipperāh and Kachār. Suitable arrangements for the protection of the capital city were then made and Khwāja Idrāk was entrusted with the task with a force of 500 cavalry and 1000 musketeers. With the rest of the army, including about 6000 cavalry (Herbert, 89),

and 100 elephants, a large park of artillery, and a fleet of 300 war-boats under the admiral Mir Shams, besides a large number of *Jaliyā* boats belonging to a Portuguese named Manoel Tavares (Campos, *History of the Portuguese in Bengal,* 59, footnote), and the war-boats of the premier Bengal zamindar Ma'sum Khan, son of Musā Khan, the viceroy hastened to face the rebel prince at Akbarnagar.

The old fort built by Raja Mān Singh at the time of the establishment of the capital at Akbarnagar was still strong, but had lost its strategic value; the river Ganges having receded nearly a *kos,* the city was no longer accessible to war-boats and could not be defended on land and water. So Ibrāhim Khan abandoned the fort, moved further down the river to a place where his son lay buried, enclosed the tomb by a strong wall, and garrisoned it with nearly 4000 troops, including Portuguese gunners, commanded by his younger nephew Mirzā Yusuf, assisted by Jalā'ir Khan, Mirzā Isfandiyār, and Mirzā Nurullah. He himself, with his elder nephew, Āhmad Beg, at the head of the remaining forces and the elephants, crossed the river and entrenched at a place named Ākbarpur (now included in Malda). The fleet remained midway for co-operation with both the forces.

Meanwhile the rebel prince occupied first the old fort and next the city. He attempted, through an envoy, to win over Ibrāhim Khan, and gave him the choice of continued service in Bengal under the nominal control of the young prince Aurangzib, or a free and safe passage back to the court with his family, in case he preferred to stick to the side of the Emperor. The Bengal governor gave a prompt and dignified reply. Rather than dishonour himself, he would die in the service of the Emperor.

Peace measures having failed, Shah Jahan prepared for war. Fully conscious that in his position delay was dangerous and that his success mainly depended on swift and sharp action, he arranged for a simultaneous assault on the new imperialist fort and the main entrenchment of Akbarpur. Dārāb Khan was sent with a large train of artillery, under the command of Khidmat-parast Khan and Rumi Khan, to storm the new fort, while Dariyā Khan Rohilla and other Afghan mansabdārs were at the same time told to cross the Ganges higher up, at an obscure ford near Pointee (about 30 miles due east of Rajmahal), and attack Ibrāhim Khan's camp.

The Bengal governor, on his part, tried his best to prevent the crossing of the river by the Afghan contingent under Dariyā Khan. but the attempt failed, and Dariyā Khan crossing the Ganges marched towards the Mughal entrenchments. The task of Dārāb

Khan proved to be more difficult and protracted. An attempt to storm the fort having failed, Dārāb Khan prepared for a siege. Under cover of artificial barriers, the rebel's general proceeded cautiously towards the fort wall and then laid mines under it in three different places, his progress being hampered at every stage by the unremitting fire of the artillery of the garrison.

Shah Jahan now tried to force an issue ; he sent his commander-in-chief, 'Abdullah Khan, at the head of 1500 cavalry, with Raja Bhim and his Rajput levy, across the Ganges to reinforce Dāriyā Khan, and make a combined assault on the Bengal governor.

Ibrāhim Khan tried his best to dispute the passage of the river by the reinforcing army. He deputed his admiral Mir Shams with the entire imperial fleet, assisted by the war-boats of Ma'sum Khan and Manoel Tavares, to oppose 'Abdullah Khan and Raja Bhim. But these persons were already in secret correspondence with the rebel prince, and made only a show of fight, with the result that 'Abdullah Khan and Raja Bhim crossed over at night without much opposition and joined Dariyā Khan. The now-united forces marched all night and came upon Ibrāhim Khan early next morning. They were at once drawn up in battle array, in a position of great advantage, with the river on one flank and a dense forest on the other.

In the engagement that followed, the imperialists laboured under various disadvantages, arising not only from the defeats already sustained, but from the depletion in their ranks and especially the death of tried and experienced soldiers. The force under Ahmad Beg who held the centre had been reduced to 700 cavalry, that under Sayyid Nurullah in the van numbered only 800 cavalry, while Ibrāhim Khan, who commanded the rear, had only about 1000 horsemen, mostly raw recruits, as the veterans lay scattered, some garrisoning the new fort of Akbarnagar and others embarked in the fleet under Mir Shams.

Yet for a time the battle was well-contested, mainly because of the personal bravery and steadfastness displayed by Ibrāhim Khan. But the superior numbers and vigour of the rebel forces ultimately ensured their triumph. The van under Nurullah first gave away. Then came the turn of Ahmad Beg who was wounded and compelled to retire from the centre. Ibrāhim Khan alone continued the desperate struggle, but gradually his soldiers deserted him, and, with only a handful of followers, he fought on till he was slain unrecognised. (*c*. April, 20, 1624).

X. Prince Shah Jahan rules Bengal, 1624

The defeat and death of the Bengal governor was quickly followed by the fall of his fortified post at Akbarnagar which had so long baffled all efforts at its capture. The mines already laid in three different places under the fort wall were now set fire to, all at the same time, and in the explosion that occurred two turrets were blown up and a wide breach was made in the fort wall. Still the garrison, reinforced by the officers who had escaped unhurt from the battle of Akbarpur, continued their gallant defence, quickly raised a mud structure to fill the gap in the fort wall, and repeatedly repulsed the besiegers, taking a heavy toll of them. At the end of the day the news of the fall of the subahdār and the desertion of the imperial fleet, arrived, and this finished the struggle. All resistance was given up, and the fort was easily occupied. A large number of the garrison were wounded and killed, and only a few escaped to Jahāngirnagar, including Ahmad Beg, Mirzā Yusuf, and Jalā'ir Khan, along with the treacherous admiral Mir Shams and his accomplices, Ma'sum Khan and Manoel Tavares.[1]

From Akbarnagar, the rebel prince proceeded triumphantly towards Jahāngirnagar, the capital, in order to seize the immense treasures and war-materials deposited there and make necessary arrangements for the administration of the country. He left Raja Bhim in charge of Akbarnagar, and issued peremptory *farmāns* demanding the allegiance of the imperial officers in Bihar and in Kāmrup, and after a journey of nine days, reached Dacca (*c*. early in May, 1624). From Ghorāghāt he had sent an officer in advance to arrange for the peaceful submission of the widow of Ibrāhim Khan and the leading imperial officers, and the latter gave Shah Jahan a cordial reception.

The stay of the rebel prince at Jahāngirnagar was only for a week, but this brief stay was crowded with important events. A sweeping change was made in the personnel of the government. Dārāb Khan, son of Khān-i-Khānān 'Abdur Rahim, who had long

[1] *Tuzuk* (R & B. II. 298-99) : *Iqbalnamah*, 217-221 E & D. VI, 408-10) : *Baharistan*, 291b-295 : K. Khan. I. 344-46 : *M. U.* (Beveridge), I. 155-56, 379, 455 : *Riyaz* (A.S.) 188-189, 190-193 : Gladwin. 69-72 : Manrique tr. Luard, ii, 305-'12 ; Campos—*History of the Portuguese in Bengal*, 59 footnote, 128.

In the light of the detailed and systematic narrative of the *Baharistan*, many obscurities and misconceptions regarding the whole affair, culminating in the decisive battle of Akbarpur, may be cleared, as has been attempted by the present writer in his article on 'Rebellion of Shah Jahan and his career in Bengal' in the *Indian Historical Quarterly*, Vol. X. No. 4, Dec., 1934.

been suspected of treachery, but had subsequently rendered faithful services in regard to the siege of the fort of Akbarnagar, was rewarded with an increase in his rank and appointed governor of Bengal. Khwāja Mulki who had been selected paymaster of the Bengal army, at the same time that Muhammad Rizā Jābiri had been appointed diwān[1] (*c.* December, 1620), but had recently joined the rebel prince, was now made diwān in place of Muhammad Rizā Jābiri, while Mirzā Hidāyetullah was chosen paymaster and news-writer, and Malik Husain, treasurer-in-chief. 'Ādil Khan and Pahār Khan were, however, retained as admirals, the former to stay at Jahāngirnagar, and the latter to accompany the rebel prince, along with the artillery commander Khidmat-parast Khan. Mirzā Mulki was afterwards replaced by Jawhār Mal Dās as Diwān. Mirzā Nathan, who had been honoured by the Emperor with the title of Shitāb Khan (*c.* November, 1622) for his services in the pacification of the Dakhinkol, and had subsequently joined the ranks of the rebel prince, was transferred from Kāmrup and put in charge of Akbarnagar in the place of Raja Bhim who was sent to Patna. At Jahāngirnagar, Shah Jahan seized a large amount of cash, totalling rupees forty lakhs, besides a large quantity of clothes, and the almost entire war equipment of the Government, 500 elephants, 400 horses, and the whole of the artillery and fleet. His resources were greatly increased, and the war-boats were particularly useful in his subsequent warfare against the Emperor.

Another important event was the arrival of a friendly mission from the king of Arakan. Meng Khamaung (Husain Shah), who had proved such a source of trouble to the Bengal subah since the days of Islām Khan, was now dead, and his son Thiri Thudhāmma Raja (1622-38) also followed the same hostile policy. Common hostility to the Emperor obviously induced the new king to conciliate the rebel prince by this friendly gesture, which the latter fully reciprocated. No tangible result, however, followed, and the whole thing proved to be nothing more than a diplomatic game.

Master of Orissa and Bengal, Shah Jahan was not the man to sit down idly. His next task was the conquest of Bihar which was easily accomplished. From Bihar he decided to proceed westward and occupy Jaunpur, Benares, Chunar, Allahabad, and Oudh, and then to march towards Agra, the capital, the entire programme to be finished before prince Parvez and Mahābat Khan who were still

[1] Md. Rizā was appointed diwān vice Wazir Khan who had succeeded Mukhlis Khan as diwān about the end of June 1619, and filled that post till his death in August 1621.

in the Deccan could move forward and check his advance. He was not, however, allowed to complete this programme. By the time Jaunpur was occupied, Oudh overrun, and the forts of Allahabad and Chunar closely besieged, the imperialists appeared on the scene and turned the tide of affairs. Oudh was vacated, the sieges of Allahabad and Chunar abandoned, and Shah Jahan finally met the imperialists in a severe engagement on the bank of the river Tons at a place named Kanti in the Mirzapur Dt. U. P., in which he was thoroughly defeated (about the end of October, 1624) and compelled to abandon Bengal, Bihar, and Orissa, and seek shelter in the Deccan again.

No details are available regarding the history of Dārāb Khan's brief rule in Bengal. It appears that the Khan for a time faithfully obeyed the orders of Shah Jahan. When the latter marched from Jaunpur to face the imperialists near Bahadurpur (in Benares Dt., about 32 miles south-east of Allahabad), prior to the battle on the river Tons, he asked Dārāb Khan to send the Portuguese chiefs Manoel Tavares and others with their war-boats to his aid, and this was quickly done. But Dārāb Khan again turned faithless and began secret negotiations with the imperialists. Inspite of repeated orders to join Shah Jahan with reinforcements prior to the battle on the Tons, the Khan made excuses and did not leave Jahāngirnagar, though he sent his younger son to Shah Jahan with 100 cavalry and 200 war-boats.

The Arakan king appears to have taken advantage of the pre-occupations of Shah Jahan to belie his professions of friendship and indulge in a raid on Bhuluā. Though the thānahdār, Mirzā Bāqi had previous experience of naval engagements, and was supplied with 700 cavalry and 300 war-boats, he could not check the enemy who carried on their depredations with impunity and retired with a rich booty (*Baharistan,* 314b. *Fathiya,* Continuation, 176a).

Dārāb Khan's disloyalty became clear in regard to his attitude towards the Bengal zamindārs, headed by Ma'sum Khan, and the Portuguese chiefs who had deserted the rebel prince on the eve of the battle of the Tons and withdrawn with their war-boats to Jahāngirnagar. Far from fighting with the traitors, Dārāb Khan openly joined them, and thus the cause of Shah Jahan in Bengal was totally lost.

Owing to the loyalty and devotion of Shitab Khan, the officer in charge of Akbarnagar, Shah Jahan, however, retained his hold on that place even after his disastrous defeat in the battle of the Tons. That officer maintained a strict censorship of all letters passing

through Akbarnagar and furnished a regular supply of money, munitions, and other war materials to the prince, and it was due to his continued faithfulness that Shah Jahan could return to Akbarnagar early in January, 1625, and recoup himself for about 24 days and gather all his war-materials and baggage prior to his final departure for the Deccan.[1]

XI. Jahāngir's rule restored in Bengal, 1625—1627

Under orders of the Emperor, prince Parvez soon left for the Deccan in pursuit of Shah Jahan, placing Bengal in charge of Mahābat Khan, assisted by his son Khānahzād Khan (*c.* early in March, 1625).

For about a year, father and son ruled Bengal. Very little is known about the history of their rule. One of the earliest acts of Mahābat Khan was the execution of Dārāb Khan in compliance with the orders of the Emperor. Further activities of the new subahdār, whose ability, experience, and military talents, were undoubtedly of a high order, were checked by the machinations of Queen Nur Jahan, backed by her brother Asaf Khan. They were determined to discredit him and to detach him from his close association with Prince Parvez, so as to improve the changes of succession of the Queen's worthless son-in-law, Shahriyār. At their instigation, Mahābat Khan was declared guilty of various misdeeds. He had not yet sent to court the elephants obtainable in Bengal, nor had he despatched the State revenue, with full accounts, and an imperial officer was despatched to deal with the whole matter. with instructions to bring him to court if the inquiry did not prove satisfactory.

Mahābat Khan clearly saw through the evil designs of his enemies and was determined to counteract them as early as possible. He first sent the elephants, and then personally visited the Emperor and thus removed him from the control of the faction opposed to him ; but the success of his *coup de main* was not lasting, and he was ultimately driven to Tatta whence he marched to the Deccan to join the rebel prince Shah Jahan (*c.* June, 1626). Mahābat Khan's open revolt was followed by his supersession in Bengal and the consequent recall of his son Khānahzād Khan. As Mahābat Khan

[1] *Baharistan*, 310a-314a, 315a-316a, 320b-324b, 326-328a. It is the only authority for the history of the rebel prince Shah Jahan's brief rule in Bengal and it ends rather abruptly with Shah Jahan's final departure from Akbarnagar for the Deccan early in February, 1625.

during his short viceroyalty was involved in political complications, the actual task of administration devolved on Khānahzād Khan, a lazy pleasure-seeking youth, who left the governmental affairs in the hands of his two favourites, Mullā Murshid and Hakim Haidar. These two officers failed miserably to check an incursion of the Arakan king. The latter proceeded unopposed from Khizrpur along the Dulāi to the environs of the capital city, defeated the officers who had at last come out to face him, entered the city, burnt and looted it, and retired with a large number of captives. Alarmed at this raid, the subahdār made a feeble attempt to bar the passage of the Arakanese war-boats by means of iron chains thrown across the river Dulāi.[1]

This was the last raid of the Arakan king in the reign of Jahāngir and the impunity with which it was carried on, and the ease with which even the capital was plundered, shows how the administration in Bengal had deteriorated since the days of Islām Khan. Rightly does the author of the *Fathiyah* remark after narrating the abject flight of the two deputies of the subahdār in the face of the Magh attack that 'fighting requires bravery and is not the business of Mullās and Hakims'.

On the recall of Khānahzād Khan to court (*c.* middle of 1626), Mukarram Khan, an experienced officer of the Bengal subah, who had next served in Orissa and Delhi as governor, was sent to govern Bengal. His period of rule was brief and uneventful, and he died of accidental drowning early in February 1627.

The last governor of Bengal to be appointed by Jahangir (late in March 1627) was Fidāi Khan. He was also an experienced officer of long standing, and rose to prominence owing to the patronage of Mahābat Khan. Very little is known of the history of his rule besides the fact that he stipulated to remit yearly from Bengal, in the shape of presents, a sum of rupees five lakhs for the Emperor and an equal amount for the Queen-consort Nur Jahan. From this time, the personal tributes of the governors of Bengal were fixed at that sum. Soon after the death of the Emperor Jahāngir (October, 29, 1627), Fidāi Khan was replaced by Qāsim Khan, the nominee of the new Emperor Shah Jahan.

The twenty-two years of Bengal history in the reign of Jahāngir proved to be a formative period. The leading tendencies of the

[1] *Fathiyah,* Continuation, 154b, 176b. Phayre, *History of Burma,* 177 and Harvey, *History of Burma,* 143, only casually refer to this raid which occurred probably during the rains of 1625.

subsequent history of Mughal Bengal, and the directions in which the currents of political life and foreign relations mainly ran, were determined during this period. As a result of the exertions of a few noted governors, particularly Islām Khan, the whole of Bengal had been brought under the effective rule of the Mughal Emperor, and the province had attained a geographical and political unity unknown for a long time before. But in the process of rounding off the territories of the new province, the government had been brought into direct and immediate contact with two powerful frontier States, the Ahom kingdom on the north-east and the kingdom of Arakan on the south-east, with both of which it had to wage severe and prolonged warfare of which only the beginnings lie in the reign of Jahāngir.

CHAPTER XVII

BENGAL UNDER SHAH JAHAN

I. Characteristic features of the history of Bengal during 1628—1727

During the eighty years that covered the reigns of Shah Jahan and Aurangzib, the history of Bengal followed a course clearly marked off from that of earlier ages in two important respects. Within its borders the province enjoyed unusually long peace. Apart from small expeditions against refractory vassals in the ill-subdued fringe-area, there was no rebellion to be subdued, nor any invasion worth speaking of to be beaten off. The strong arm of Islām Khan Chishti, and the still more potent statesmanship of Ibrāhim Khan Fath-i-Jang had done their work effectively, and for over half a century rebellion durst not raise its head in Mughal Bengal. The renewed strength of the ruling power overflowed in the form of successful expansion in the north and the south, into Assam and Orissa.

This happy change was mainly due to one remarkable fact: during a period of 68 years (1639-1707) there were three very long viceroyalties in the place of the average short term of three years enjoyed by the Emperor's other representatives in Bengal. Prince Muhammad Shujā' ruled the province for 21 years (1639-1659), with a caretaker during his absence for two years in the middle; Shāista Khan the premier Peer of the Realm (Āmir-ul-umarā) governed for 23 years (1664-1688) with a two years' break under two short-term successors; and Prince Muhammad 'Azim (later created 'Azim-us-shān) for ten years (1698-1707), mostly through his son as deputy. Besides holding the provincial rule continuously for such long periods, these three viceroys were near kinsmen of the Emperor and their position was stronger than that of the ordinary servants of the Crown who had governed before them. Hence they could enforce obedience at home in full confidence of being backed by the Sovereign. Local opposition soon found itself powerless against them, rivals felt their intrigues at the imperial Court against these Bengal viceroys futile. The world recognised this fact by a timid and respectful attitude to them as to royalty itself.

The next characteristic feature of this period was the policy of trans-frontier expansion which began in 1635 in an attack on Assam, reached its high-water mark in Mir Jumla's double triumph of 1662, but immediately after his death next year received a sharp set-back that caused a stalemate. But the Mughals were defeated

in Assam by Nature and not by man, and at last they were finally expelled from that province in 1682. When this end came, the imperial power had already begun to decline from the zenith all over India, and a decade later the Empire began to break up from the shattering blows inflicted by the Marathas in the south. Its actual extinction in Bengal was, however, delayed by the extraordinary ability and long lives of the two subahdārs Murshid Quli Khan (1703-1727) and Alivardi Khan (1740-1756), who between them administered Bengal for 41 years.

In Shah Jahān's reign there were only three occurrences of sufficient importance to deserve a long notice. These were the capture of Hughli port from the Portuguese, the invasion of Assam, and the war of succession among Shah Jahan's sons. The Assam war was also the great foreign war in which this province was engaged during Aurangzib's reign. It ended by definitely crippling the imperial power in the north-east, though as a set-off to it Shāista Khan could point to his permanent conquest of Chātgāon (1666) and the second Mughal entry into the Kuch capital as conquerors in March 1684. The most notable event in the internal history of Bengal in Aurangzib's time was the struggle with the English and Dutch merchants which served to expose the real hollowness of the imperial power and forced the Emperor in the end to patch up a peace with the unconquerable rulers of the waters. The rising of Sobhā Singh and Rahim Khan was a temporary fire which was quickly put out.

Jahangir's last governor of Bengal, Fidāi Khan was removed by Shah Jahan immediately after his coronation (4th Feb. 1628). The new Emperor sent Qāsim Khan Juyini as his own nominee there. On 15th January 1632 the imperial Court received from this viceroy presents worth two lakhs of rupees, consisting of 33 elephants, 27 hill-ponies, some shields of rhinoceros hide, 40 maunds of aloe wood and other special products of the province. Later in the same year followed the news of a resounding victory achieved in the same province. This was the capture of the port of Hughli from the hands of the Portuguese (on 19th September). As it was the first land battle in India in which indigenous troops and methods of warfare triumphed over European troops and European leadership, however poor, it will be studied here in detail.

II. Hughli and its Portuguese settlers

Some twenty miles north of Calcutta the river Ganges receives two once-mighty feeders, the Saraswati from the south-west and

the Jamunā from the east. Their point of junction has been named by Hindu piety as Tribeni, or the union of the three braids of hair, in remembrance of Prayāg (modern Allahabad) the holy city of three rivers. South of the Saraswati in the loop formed by it before it falls into the Ganges, stood the ancient city of Sātgāon (Seven Villages), the greatest port of Bengal for ocean-going ships in the middle ages. Its wealth and population are the theme of old Bengali poetry and legend and early travellers' tales. But in the course of centuries the mouths of the feeders of the Ganges became choked with sand and their water supply diminished till at last the tidal Ganges alone remained navigable, while the Saraswati and the Jamunā dried up into narrow channels on which even the smallest craft could not ply except for a few weeks in the monsoon. This spelt the doom of Sātgāon as a port, and the site of this once flourishing city has become a fever-haunted wilderness of jungle and morass, broken by some rice-fields,—whose condition is picturesquely described by its modern name of Bānsberiā or 'the Bamboo Grove'. This change in the river-bed had been completed by the time when the Mughals conquered Bengal.

The Portuguese, who were the first among the Europeans to visit the Bay of Bengal for trade, at first used to come and sail away every year when the trading season was over. Their trade was so profitable to both sides and their naval power so welcome an assistance to the local rulers, that the Bengal sultans encouraged them to make settlements of a more permanent character and even to undertake the collection of the custom-duties of the port, first of Sātgāon and next, when Sātgāon declined, of Hughli on the main channel of the Ganges, some three miles east of Sātgāon.

The superiority of the European races in the use of fire-arms, their skill in navigation and the larger size and heavier armament of their ships made the Portuguese the dominant sea-power in the Indian ocean in the 16th century. Hence, the sea-borne trade of Bengal, and through Bengal, of Upper India also,—deserted Sātgāon and favoured the new Portuguese port of Hughli; it passed into Portuguese hands except for a few Arab and Malaya ships. This natural change could not be understood by the Mughal Court-writers, who called it the stealing away of the business and wealth of the royal port of Sātgāon by the treachery of the Feringis.[1]

[1] Abdul Hamid Lahori writes (*Pad.* iA. 434)—"During the rule of the Bengali (Sultāns) a body of Feringi traders, inhabitants of Sondip, used to visit Sātgāon and populated (*i. e.*, colonised) a place on the bank of the creek one *kos* beyond Sātgāon for themselves; here they built some mansions, with the permission of

Towards the middle of the reign of Akbar, in May 1578, a Feringi named Pedro Tavares, who was the chief of the Portuguese at Hughli, visited the Emperor's camp by invitation, and so highly pleased Akbar by his polished manners and intellectual talk that he received permission to found a city in Bengal for the Portuguese, who were promised full religious liberty, including the right to preach their religion, make converts, and build churches. (*Akbarnamah,* iii. 349, Campos 52.) The fruit of this mission was the establishment of a Portuguese colony at Hughli[1] (*c.* 1579), a place on the right bank of the Ganges, 2 miles or so east of Satgaon. Here the great Augustinian monastery was built in 1599 two miles north of Hughli at a village which came to be called *Bandel* (a Portuguese corruption of *bandar* or port), and also the College of the Jesuits (in a north-western suburb of Bandel), besides a poor-house and some other minor religious edifices.

III. Government and Society of the Portuguese at Hughli

Here at the end of the 16th century grew up the first real settlement of the Portuguese in lower Bengal. But the place was not politically a European colony. It did not form any portion of the dominion of the Portuguese sovereign, governed by an agent of that king, but was simply the residence of a small body of foreigners situated in a Muslim territory; and though these foreigners administered their parochial affairs themselves by the sufferance of the Muslim king of the country, they were bound to execute his

the Bengali (Sultāns) on the plea of a house being necessary for their buying and selling. In the course of time, owing to the stupidity and carelessness of the rulers, many Feringis assembled here and built extremely lofty and strong mansions and strengthened them with cannon, muskets and other armaments. In a short time a large town (*ma'mura*) grew up here, and it got the name Hughli Bandar. It became the practice for ships from Firang to call at this port and carry on their trade; and so the market of Sātgāon port lost its splendour and use".

[1] Before the Portuguese settlement, the petty village of Hughli contained only a number of straw-huts and bamboo stockades in which the visiting Portuguese ships used to sell their cargo of salt from Hijli and which they evacuated when the transaction was over. It was called a *ganj* or mart (which Persian word is disguised as *chandeu-gandja* in Cabral's narrative, Luard, ii. 392). A store-house of salt (or any other commodity) is called in Bengali a *gola,* and this word in the mouth of the Portuguese became *O-GOLIM,* (*O* being the definite article in the Portuguese language and a nasal suffix being added to most Indian place-names by these people.) The Bengalis turned *O-goli* into *Hugli.*

orders, submit to his law courts, and pay his taxes. They did not enjoy any extra-territorial right.

The position of the Portuguese at Hughli was really very weak. The power of their home-country, then annexed to Spain, had sunk to its nadir. The Spanish king Philip IV was a fool and a sluggard. His empire in the Indies, as the viceroy the Conde de Linhares reported in 1635, was then suffering from an utter want of money, ships and even men to work the ships. Their Indian trade had been seized by the Dutch, who now dominated the Indian Ocean. Hughli itself could not expect any help from Goa, as it was under the administrative control of the governor of Ceylon, and the Portuguese power in Ceylon was bleeding to death in consequence of a ruinous war with the Raja of Kandy.

Van Linschoten observed in 1589, that at Chātgāon and Hughli, " the Portuguese have no forts nor any government, nor policy, (such) as in India (*i. e.*, in Portuguese India or the Goa and Daman territory, they have), but live in a manner like wild men, and untamed horses, for that every man doth there what he will, and every man is lord (and master). Neither esteem they anything of justice, whether there be any or none ; and in this manner do certain Portugals dwell among them . . . and are for the most part such as dare not stay in India (*i. e.* Portuguese India) for some wicked things by them committed (there) ". Eighteen years later, Pyard de Laval, generalised from his observation of Chātgāon, "A large number of Portuguese dwell in freedom at the ports on this coast of Bengal; they are also very free in their lives being like exiles. They do only traffic without any fort, order or police, and live like natives of the country: they durst not return to India (*i. e.* Goa territory) for certain misdeeds they have committed." Gonsales at Sondip is the aptest illustration of this.

This was the condition of Hughli in its primitive stage. But as the 17th century advanced, the growing prosperity and population[1] of the port secured for it some sort of recognition from the authorities in Portugal, without the full status of a colony. Hitherto the people of Hughli had been allowed by the Mughal Government to

[1] In 1633 Father Cabral, a participant in the siege, wrote, "Of the various trading ports of the Portuguese in Bengal, the richest, the most flourishing, and most populous was that of Hughli. To it vessels of India, China, Malacca and Manila repaired in great numbers. The Hindustanis, the Mogols, the Persians, and the Armenians came there to fetch goods . . . They paid yearly to the custom-houses of the Mughal above a hundred thousand *tanqas* (rupees) in duties on the salt trade of the kingdom of Hijli which they carried on". Luard, *Manrique*, ii.

manage their local affairs, including defence, provided that the Emperor's overlordship was not denied. The king of Spain and Portugal now nominated to Hughli a *Captain Convidor*, as a sort of Mayor with four assistants yearly elected by the citizens, and placed the port under the protection of his governor of Ceylon, as Goa was too distant.

The political disorder of the town is best illustrated by Father Cabral's naive admission: "The Captain was obeyed by the common folk, at least; sometimes, too, he would enforce his authority on the gentry of the place." For, the dominant white gentry of the port led rich, lazy, free lives, keeping oriental harems and pursuing their jealous quarrels about dignity and mortal feuds.

The moral degeneration of the Portuguese in Hughli was even greater than their military weakness. Inside the town the population did not form a happy family or even an orderly civil society. The small body of pure Europeans stood aloof from the numerous half-breeds (mestizoes), while the black peasants and slaves formed a third and depressed caste. At the top of the social ladder, the priests out-numbered the able-bodied male laymen of European race, and these two classes were divided by pride, jealousy and conflict of material interests. Hence a united opposition to any attack from outside was impossible. Moreover, all the manual labour of fortification, entrenching, rowing the ships and serving the naval guns,—was done by Indians, mostly Bengalis of the peasant class mixed with purchased slaves. These men did not form part of the city population, but lived with their families in huts in the defenceless villages outside, so that the arrest of their wives and children in the suburbs by the Mughal invaders at once forced the sailors of Hughli to submit to the invaders, and their defection paralysed the defence of the port through an absolute shortage of labour. The vast Indian population of Hughli, made up of mechanics, tradesmen, and servants, merely wanted to live in peace, they had no heart in resisting the Mughals to the bitter end, and so the fighting for the port fell solely on the Europeans and mestizoes, assisted by a small band of loyal black Christians.

IV. Causes of the Mughal attack on Hughli

The Portuguese settlers of Hughli did not themselves commit piracy in the Mughal territorial waters, nor raid Bengal villages for capturing slaves. But they shared the odium of their fellow countrymen who lived in Arakan as allies of the Magh king and made annual raids in the rivers of lower Bengal, committing

unspeakable atrocities on the Indians who fell into their hands. The innate cruelty of the southern Latin races and the inflamed lust of seamen in foreign parts, made the entire Feringi race a terror and abomination to the Indian people. Their periodical incursions stopped the inland navigation of deltaic Bengal by the local people in their raiding season, and turned many a river-side village into a manless wilderness. A lurid picture of the forms of cruelty which they practised on their Indian victims has been drawn by Shihābuddin Tālish in his account of Shāista Khan's conquest of Chatgāon. These Feringis from outside used to call at the port of Hughli, fraternise with their compatriots there, and sell their captives in the local market. The Indian people naturally could not distinguish between the Portuguese of Hughli and their kith and kin in fixing responsibility for the plunder, rape and enslavement committed by the same race.

The second cause of public feeling against the Portuguese was that by hook or crook they converted to Christianity many Bengalis of the villages of our riverine tract, which they took on lease from the Bengal rulers.

Lastly, the growing population and armament of Hughli, added to the known superiority of the Portuguese in the use of fire-arms and their unchallenged sea-power, threatened the creation of an *imperium in imperio* at the mouth of the Ganges, so that the Mughal Emperor "could not but conceive great fears (*and they were not unfounded*) lest His Majesty of Spain should possess himself of the kingdom of Bengal", as Father J. Cabral himself admitted. (Manrique, ii, 395).

Hence, the far-sighted Shah Jahan personally instructed Qāsim Khan at the time of appointing him to Bengal, to take possession of Hughli, crush the Portuguese power, and make captives of the white men, women and children there to be sent to Court and made Muslims or slaves. This was in reprisal for the misdeeds of the Feringis living in Bengal. Father John Cabral. S. J., in his report on the capture of Hughli written only one year after the incident, mentions three charges (which he piously calls pretexts) as brought by Shah Jahan to justify his attack upon that port: First, that he had received in Bengal several affronts from Manoel Tavares . . . when he was in revolt against his father Jahangir. Secondly, that the port of Hughli had sent him no embassy or customary presents at his accession to the throne. Thirdly, that the port of Hughli was supplying the Magh king, the enemy of the Mughal Empire, with men for his galleys and with ammunition. (*Ibid*, ii. 394-395).

Now, the second charge is shown by Cabral himself to have

been true. As for the first, the contemporary history of Mirzā Nathan proves its truth in every detail, while Cabral makes a brief general admission of it. We learn that in 1624 when Prince Shah Jahan then in rebellion against his father, conquered Bengal and Bihar, the Feringis of Dacca and other places in Bengal with their boats and those of the East Bengal zamindārs, joined him for gain[1] and proceeded up to the junction of the Ganges and the Tons. Their leaders were Manoel Tavares (corrupted into *Manmil* in the *Bahāristan* ms.), Miguel Rodriguez (corrupted into *Rodris, Durzisus,* or *Zarrisuz* in the Persian ms., tr. p. 736, 750), and some others. Seduced by Prince Parvez, they treacherously deserted Shah Jahān (in concert with the zamindārs' flotilla) and sailed down the Ganges to Bengal, sacking the city of Patna on their way, but were repulsed at Rājmahal by Mirzā Nathan. The desertion of his entire fleet ruined the cause of Shah Jahān and he had to flee back to the Deccan. Shah Jahān's wife Mumtāz Mahal had been sent to the fort of Rohtās, to be delivered of her youngest son Murād Bakhsh there, and two of her female attendants left behind at Patna were kidnapped by the Portuguese and subjected to outrage worse than death. (Manucci, *Storia do Mogor,* i. 176, 182).

As for the third charge, it was the usual practice of European adventurers in foreign parts to sell arms to the " Country Powers " against the orders of their own national Government. Thus, in 1661 while Shivaji was besieged in Panhala, some English factors of Rājāpur sold mortars to his enemies inspite of their President ordering strict neutrality. Again, the first Burmese War was precipitated by some English officers in Chatgāon selling munitions to rebels against the Burmese king, though the E. I. Co. was then at peace with him. (See Capt. W. White's *Political History of the Extraordinary Events which led to the Burmese War,* 2nd. ed. 1823.)

V. The siege of Hughli, 1632

Qāsim Khan was a man of exceptional ability and experience. He knew his own side's weakness in firearms and naval skill, and made his preparations very cleverly so as to concentrate an overwhelming force against the enemy and at the same time throw them off their guard. His chief object was to block their path of retreat

1 This disproves Manrique's boast that Miguel the captain of the port and Christians at Dacca, loyally refused to join the Prince in his rebellion against the reigning sovereign. (Manrique, ii. 88. 311).

down the Ganges to the open sea and prevent the arrival of reinforcements to them by ship.

He formed three forces which were to move by different routes at different times and converge at the time of attack. First, he sent under Bahādur Kambu (his chief lieutenant) a division including his personal contingent of horse and foot, to Makhsusābād outwardly for taking possession of the Crownlands there, but with secret orders to wait for the other forces. A second force was got ready under the subahdār's son I'nāyetullah as its nominal chief, but with Ālayār Khan as the true commander. To deceive the Feringis it was publicly announced that the expedition was designed against the zamindār of Hijli island. This force on reaching Burdwan halted. The actual attack on Hughli was put off till the flotilla (*nawwāra*) of the imperial government (under Khwāja Sher) and the numerous war-boats of the loyal zamindārs under Ma'sum Khan (the son of Musā Khan and grandson of the famous I'sā Khan Masnad-i-'Ala) had advanced from Sripur (south of Dacca) to Sānkrāil (some 10 miles below Calcutta) and closed the channel of the Ganges.

On the 14th June 1632, the flotilla reached this spot. Immediately on getting news of it, the division at Burdwan by a rapid march of one day and night reached Haldipur, midway between Sātgāon and Hughli, and a few days afterwards the first division from Makhsusābād arrived and joined them. The combined land army hastened south to Sānkrāil and helped the fleet in throwing a bridge of boats across the Ganges at the narrow straits. They also began trenches on both banks of the river. These earthworks in the course of time extended for many miles between Hughli and Betor, and when in August the big guns arrived from Dacca, Burdwan and Rajmahal and were mounted on these batteries, and more chains were drawn across the Ganges at different places, the doom of Hughli was sealed.

The attacking forces appeared before Hughli on 20th June and the place was captured on 15th September,[1] after an investment

[1] Father Cabral gives the following dates, which I have here converted from his New style to the Old style or unreformed calendar observed throughout this volume, by deducting ten—it may be eleven days. The invaders made their first demonstration before Hughli on 20th June and their first real attack on 22nd June; the Portuguese deciding on the evacuation of Hughli embarked at night on 14th Sept and the Mughals took the port next day.

The Court-historian of Shah Jahān says that the imperialists set their faces to attacking the enemy on 2nd Zihijja (=10 June; but if *duum* is emended as *daham*, the date would be 18 June). The last mine was fired on 10th Rabi'-ul-awwal (=19 Sept); but if we emend *chahar-daham* into *chaharum*, the date would be 9 Sept., and the actual evacuation would follow 4 or 5 days later. Such emendations

of nearly three months, but there was nothing heroic in the victory of the imperialists.

The first portion of the invading army was sighted about three miles from Hughli on 16th June. Some days were passed in parleys started by the frightened people of the port. Soon the second division arrived, and on the 20th and 21st the imperialists made demonstrations before the city, with a view to discovering the location and strength of the defences. The grand attack was delivered on the 22nd; the Mughals in full force advanced and captured the suburbs. The defenders were a little over 300 whites, with a large number of Indian Christians, mostly slaves (a very unreliable corps), and four thousand Bengali sailors for manning the war-boats; their captain-general was Manoel de Azevedo. "The city had no walls nor artillery of any kind. What musketry they had—there was much of it and of good quality—was distributed and (sub) captains appointed." (Cabral, ii. 399). The severe loss which the invaders suffered on this day from the musket-fire of the Portuguese concealed in a garden, entirely damped their ardour for open assaults, and for the next two days they fought from afar and feebly.

Negotiations for peace were now opened by mutual desire, the Portuguese troops being overborne by the clamour of their peace-loving property-owners, and the Mughals wishing to gain time for their big guns and reinforcements to come from Dacca and other places. At first the Portuguese defenders too were not without hopes of relief by their fellow-countrymen; but the Feringis of Arakan were involved in a war with the Magh king (their strong ally in the past), and the Goa Government was without ships, men or money. So, in the end, Hughli was left to its fate unaided.

In their eagerness to buy peace, the civil population of Hughli paid the Mughal general one lakh of rupees as contribution and also surrendered many Muslims who had been made Christians, besides giving up a number of boats. But the deceitful Mughal commander, after these concessions, only raised his demand to seven lakhs of rupees and the total disarming of Hughli. So, the whites set their teeth and decided to fight to the end, and hostilities were resumed.

Hughli was an open port; it had no fort, no protective wall, no ditch round it. The *nalas* intersecting the soft alluvial soil,

are reasonable in view of the notorious copyists' errors in Persian mss and the misprints in the Bibliotheca Indica Persian series.

So there is no real conflict of dates between the two sides.

when filled with tidal water or the monsoon floods, acted as a sort of natural fosse round the centre of it. Just before the Mughal attack, the Portuguese had hastily run lines of barricades and palisades from house to house to protect their own quarter. But the bamboo poles were knocked down by the iron-plated heads of the Mughal war-elephants, and the invaders' artillery set fire to the crowded native huts. The only defensible posts were two substantial Houses of Religion and a few pucca private dwellings, held by determined musketeers.

The daily firing from the Mughal guns made the suburbs of Hughli untenable. The Portuguese abandoned the village of Bāli (close to the ditch in the north), which contained the College of the Jesuits, and here the Mughal officers took up their quarters. Justly afraid of muskets in European hands, Bahādur Khan gave up the attempt to storm the port, but followed a policy of attrition which succeeded in the end. He began to raid the neighbouring villages and places with a Christian population and dragged into captivity the families of the 4000 Bengali sailors of the Portuguese ships (called *ghurābis*) and other servants of the Feringis who lived there. This step coerced the men themselves into abandoning the cause of the Feringis and coming over to the Mughals, and the defence was paralysed by the utter want of labour to man the boats, supply the troops, and dig the trenches.

Half way through the siege, early in the month of August, big guns came to the Mughal general from Dacca and other places and also a party of Portuguese under the traitor Martin Afonso de Mello with his own ships. This man now became "the engineer and Commissary General" of the besiegers and supplied the brain and spear-head of the Mughal attack, especially during the fatal retreat down the river. Some naval attacks were made, but they failed through the superior skill and courage of the defenders. Mines were run under some of the well-defended buildings. The last of them was fired on 9th September with heavy loss to both the sides.

Thus in the end the situation within the beleaguered port became intolerable. There was no relief within sight. And at last on 14th September, evacuation was decided on. All the people, *i. e.*, the Portuguese and other well-to-do Christians, embarked in their remaining boats with the utmost secrecy. They could have made a dash down to the sea in safety, but the retreat was mismanaged and conducted without a common leader or plan, each boat moving as it pleased at its own time. The voyage down was one long tragedy. Many of the boats were sunk usually by the shore batteries, and

some through the explosion of their powder.[1] The surviving boats made their way through the breaches torn open in the bridge of boats by the exploding ships, and fighting their last duel with Martin Afonso near Betor (south west of Calcutta) reached safely at Sagar island. Here they were met by relieving ships from Dianga and Goa.

VI. The losses on the two sides

Those who thus saved themselves numbered about 3000 souls, namely a hundred and odd Portuguese males and 60 to 70 white women, the rest being natives of the country and slaves. But the losses of the defenders had been heavy. A little over a hundred Portuguese had perished during the siege, mostly in the retreat, the Catholic priests and monks doing the most heroic service. The Muslim Court historian boasts that " ten thousand of the enemy—men and women, old and young, were slain drowned or burnt, and 4,400 Christians, male and female, were made captives. " We learn that only four hundred Feringi captives, male and female, from Hughli were produced before the Emperor at Agra, on 8th July 1633. They were offered the choice between liberty at the cost of apostatizing to Islām and lifelong slavery and chastisement on refusal. "Some of them agreed to the conversion, but most refused . . . Those who refused were kept permanently in prison ; most of them died in captivity ". (*Pādishāh-nāmah*, iA. 439, 534). Their sufferings[2] are described by Manrique, ii. 325-332.

Father John Cabral thus sums up the losses of the Christians, " Most of the women were lost, many of them matrons of high rank. Between killed and captives the Portuguese lost about a hundred persons. Add four religious of St Augustine, three of our Society (*i. e.*, Jesuits), six or seven secular priests, and 25 married soldiers

[1] The Portuguese suffered surprisingly little loss of life in actual fighting on land or in pitched naval battles during a siege of three months. It was only when at the end of the struggle they were attempting to slip away in their ships down the river, that they lost many men and boats from the fire of the Mughal trench guns on both banks of the river at the narrow tortuous places. But here the attack succeeded mainly from the direction and naval assistance which one of their own disloyal fellow-countrymen, Martin Afonso de Mello gave. He had gone over to the governor of Dacca asking for vengeance on some Portuguese of Hughli with whom he had a personal quarrel.

[2] " The chief Portuguese and the women who most attracted him were included among those kept by the Emperor. These women he ordered to be put in the mahal or seraglio, and the men in the public jail ". (Manrique ii. 326, see also *Storia do Mogor*, i. 202, 183.)

with their boys and girls. I do not speak of the slaves, nor of the coloured people, because I have no account". (Manrique, ii. 418). The most reliable figure for the loss on the imperial side that Father Cabral could get by careful inquiry was 4,300 killed, including Bengal troops, and 25 *āhadis*. Rumour, no doubt, estimated the number of the dead as high as 30,000 (ii. 419). Abdul Hamid Lahori quotes the official despatch of the imperialists, "From the beginning to the end of the campaign, a total of ten thousand of the enemy, men and women, old and young,—were slain, blown up by gunpowder, drowned in water, or burnt in fire; the imperial army lost nearly one thousand dead". (*Pad.* i.A. 439).

VII. Reconquest of Kāmrup, 1637—'38

The Ahom war of Shah Jahan's reign was not the effect of imperialistic expansion. It was a war forced on the Mughals for the defence of their district of Kāmrup against the ambitious policy of the Ahom king. An exceptionally able and enterprising ruler had ascended the throne of Assam in 1603, in the person of Susengphā, rightly surnamed Prātap Singh in memory of his splendid victories. His long reign (1603-1641) covers the entire reign of Jahangir and the first half of Shah Jahan's rule before the latter Emperor became involved in those wars in Balkh and Qandahar which diverted all the strength and resources of the empire to the north-western frontier.

Pratāp Singh set himself to strengthening his kingdom by raising a chain of forts at strategic points, building embanked roads (*āli*), and drawing all the neighbouring rajas to his side by war, marriage, friendly alliance, and extension of his protective vassalage over them. His growing power induced most petty chiefs of that corner to save their estates by voluntarily accepting his overlordship and making him their "adoptive father" by a religious ceremony. The expansive force of the new Ahom Monarchy as it spread westwards inevitably came into collision with Mughal power in Kāmrup.

The younger branch of the Kuch Bihar royal house which ruled over Kāmrup (called Kuch Hājo in the Persian histories) lost their independence with Islām Khan Chishti's capture of Raja Parikshit Narayan in 1613, (see ch. 15 sec. v). The deposed ruler died in 1616. His younger brother Bali Narayan (called Baldev in the Persian accounts) fled to the Ahom king Susengphā, with whose aid he was set up as the tributary Raja of Darrang and given the title of Dharma Narayan. After the Ahom victory over Ābā Bakr (1615, see ch. 16 sec. iv) the Mughals had constantly to fight to maintain their precarious hold on the country west of the Bar Nadi and they

occupied Hajo town and a few other forts while disorder and anarchy reigned throughout the rest of the district. (Gait, 106-111). In the years following Shah Jahan's accession, the causes of war quickly multiplied. Every enemy of the Mughals, every rebel or revenue-defaulter in the north-eastern corner of the subah of Bengal, sought refuge in Ahom territory and found asylum with its king. On that ill-defined frontier, disputes about smuggling, the harbouring of run-away subjects, poaching on each other's territories, and even the killing of subjects, accumulated, as the Ahom king haughtily refused to extradite escaped criminals or punish his subjects' alleged crimes. (S. Mahant's *Buranji*, paragraphs 123, 129. Gait, 112). When Islām Khan Mashhadi, the new subahdār, arrived in Bengal (May 1635), Bali Narayan was instigated by Satrajit the disloyal Mughal thānahdār of Pāndu, to profit by the administrative disorder due to the change of governors and push into Hājo and attack its faujdār, 'Abdus Salām. Under a rule made in Jahangir's last years, every new subahdar of Bengal was bound to send to the Emperor cash and presents worth five lakhs of rupees once in his viceroyalty as his tribute. This amount was expected to be made up of the tribute payable by the local vassals and landholders to the new viceroy in honour of his arrival. Thus every three years,—the average duration of a subahdari in Bengal,—the screw was turned at the top and the leading men of the province were squeezed for satisfying the throne. As elephants were the main and most acceptable produce of Bengal, this rule pressed hardest on the vassals holding jagirs on the Assam frontier on condition of catching elephants by *kheda* there. These men had been exasperated by the harshness of Qāsim Khan.

'Abdus Salām wrote to Dacca for aid; the governor sent him reinforcements under Shaikh Muhiuddin (a brother of 'Abdus Salām), Muhammad Sālih Kambu, Sayyid Zain-ul-'ābidin and other high officers (*c.* July 1636). But through mismanagement among the leaders and the deceitful reports of Satrajit, the Mughals lost the post at Pāndu. 'Abdus Salām held Hājo and the outposts near it and sent Zain-ul-'ābidin eastwards to meet the Ahoms, who were pushed back to their frontier at Srighāt. Desultory fighting continued for some months.

Fresh reinforcements now arrived from Dacca under Islām Khan's brother Mir Zain-uddin 'Ali, with 1500 horse and 4000 foot (musketeers and archers), besides the contingents of the Bengal zamindars and abundant supplies and munitions. This expedition failed through the lack of concert among the imperial commanders. 'Abdus Salām in attempting to fall back from Srighāt to Hājo, was attacked at night by the Ahoms with 500 war-boats. Satrajit fled away

with some of the Bengal zamindars and their flotilla, and the imperialists fighting on the sandy island of Majuli were totally defeated; Sālih Kambu was killed, Bāyazid (zamindar of Dacca) was taken prisoner and the Mughal flotilla and stores were captured by the Ahoms.

Next Bali Narayan advanced from Srighāt and Pāndu and besieged the Mughal force in Hājo. Starvation compelled the defenders to capitulate; 'Abdus Salām and his brother Muhiuddin were sent as captives to the Ahom Court, but Zain-ul-abidin bravely held out and fell fighting within his trenches, *c.* Jan. 1637 (S. Mahant's *Buranji*, para 132).

This war had very evil consequences for the Mughals in the future. It rudely broke the jealous isolation in which the Ahom people and king had secluded themselves from Bengal and the people of the Mughal empire, and it dispelled the fear which the Mughal arms and soldiery used to arouse so long as they were distant and unknown. It also proved that naval supremacy must dominate any war in Assam.

In another theatre of war, however, the prospects of the imperialists brightened. The corps under Mir Zain-uddin Ali attacked Chandra Narayan (another insurgent son of Parikshit Narayan) who ruled over Karibāri on the north bank of the Brahmaputra; he fled away (28 Dec. 1936) and the Mughals recovered Karibāri, and subdued places on the south bank of the river. The traitor Satrajit was seized at Dhubri and sent to Dacca, where he was executed.

Meantime, the Ahoms had pushed on to Jogigophā (near Goalpara) and begun to raise stockades there; but the imperialists advanced from Dhubri and by repeated attacks drove the enemy back beyond the Banas river. The country south of the Brahmaputra was now fully subjugated. The Mughals reached Chandankot and from that base sent out a detachment which was faced by Bali Narayan on the Kālāpāni river near Bishnupur, in the midst of a dense jungle. Both sides now received large reinforcements, and at last in the night of 30th October 1637 Bali Narayan delivered an attack *en masse.* A long fight followed, in which the Ahoms were defeated and their stockades were successively stormed; they lost several chiefs and over 4000 soldiers killed, and three leading captains captured, besides much armament left to the victors. Similar victories with large amounts of booty and high-ranking prisoners were gained by the Mughals in the following weeks. Pāndu and Srighāt were conquered (Dec. 1637) and the Ahom army was scattered and nearly 500 of their war-boats and 300 guns were

captured by the victors. The whole of Kuch Hājo was thus cleared of the Ahoms and the campaign was gloriously closed by the taking of fort Kājali, at the junction of the Kalang river with the Brahmaputra which was the frontier post of the Ahom kingdom. Bali Narayan henceforth led a fugitive's life till he perished in great distress among the hills.

During the next three months the whole district was pacified, a revenue settlement was made with the landlords, and Gauhati chosen as the headquarters of the governor. Finding all their resources exhausted by this twelve years' unsuccessful war, the Ahom frontier governors induced their king to make peace with Bengal through Alayār Beg, the successor of Zainuddin 'Ali at Gauhāti (Sep. 1638). The Barnadi in the north and the Ashur-āli in the south were fixed as the boundary. (S. Mahant's *Buranji,* paras 139-142 ; Abd. Ham. ii. 65-90.)

VIII. Another conflict with Arakan, 1638.

While the army and navy of Bengal were thus entangled in Assam, a great storm threatened the province from its south-eastern corner, and detained the viceroy at Dacca in defensive watchfulness. A new Magh king of Arakan sent his fleet from Chatgāon to raid the Noākhāli and Dacca districts, but happily the attack was not pushed home.

After the death of the Arakan king Sri Sudharma-rāj (Thiri Thudhamma Raja, r. 1622-1638), his son and successor was murdered by a servant, the dowager queen's lover, who seized the throne. The murdered Raja's paternal uncle, Mangat-rāi, declared himself independent in his viceroyalty of Chatgaon; but his attempt to oust the usurper from the throne of Arakan failed through his naval weakness, and he had to flee to Bengal for safety along with his leading partisans. He marched by land towards Bhuluā and wrote to the imperial thanahdar of the frontier post of Jagdiā for protection from the pursuing Magh fleet. By Islām Khan's command the thānahdār of Jagdiā drove away by gunfire some 200 Magh *jalias* which were obstructing Mangat-rāi and ferried him over the Feni river into Mughal territory.

Taking advantage of the confusion of civil war in Chatgaon, over ten thousand people of Bengal who were being held in slavery there by the Feringis, escaped to their homeland.

The Feringi settlers and pirates of Chatgaon, who had backed Mangat-rāi in his abortive rising, now abandoned that city, in fear of the Magh king's vengeance. Most of them migrated to the

Portuguese possessions, and a few came over to the Mughals with their families and boats; in the course of time most of the latter embraced Islam and became merged in the local population.

Mangat-rāi's family and supporters with 14 elephants and nearly 9,000 men (both Arakanese and Tailang), reached Dacca and were welcomed and provided for by the subahdar. Then the Magh king, after some preparation, launched a naval attack. A fleet composed of over 500 *jalias,* 150 *ghurābs* and five ships full of munition, entered the estuary between Bhuluā and Sripur. Islām Khan met the threat by advancing from Dacca, some eight miles southwards to Dhapa and rapidly raising four earth and bamboo forts on the two banks at the *mohānā* of Khizrpur and planting heavy guns on them. This bold front scared away the Magh navy and the attack did not materialise, (end of September 1638). (Abd. Ham. ii. 117-121.)

The true cause of this escape of Bengal was the defection of the Chatgaon Feringis from the side of the Arakan king; their gunners and sailors were the spear-head of the Magh raids into our riverine tracts, and the Arakanese left to themselves durst not face the Mughal guns by assuming the offensive. Twenty-eight years later, the winning over of the Feringi navy of Chatgaon by Shāista Khan ensured his easy conquest of that port of Arakan.

IX. Prince Muhammad Shujā' as governor of Bengal, 1639—1660

With the coming of Prince Shujā' to Bengal as viceroy began a long period of peace for this province. He himself lived at Rājmahal on the frontier close to Bihar, while a deputy governed lower Bengal from Dacca. His rule of twenty-one years (April 1639—April 1660) was broken by two short periods of absence (March 1647—March 1648 and March 1652—September 1652), during which he was called to his father's side to assist him in campaigns beyond the Afghan passes. And, between January 1658 and March 1659 he twice left the province to contest his father's throne, but had to beat a speedy retreat in discomfiture, and the provincial administration broke down and anarchy ensued, which was ended only by Mir Jumla's assumption of the viceroyalty about the middle of 1660.

In March 1642 the province of Orissa[1] was joined to Shujā's

[1] Aurangzib after imprisoning his father and seizing the throne, in June 1658, made an attempt to conciliate Shuja' by granting him the province of Bihar in addition. Thus the old Presidency of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa as known in British Indian history from 1804 to 1911 was first formed in Shujā's time.

charge. He immediately sent Muhammad Zamān Teharāni from Dacca to administer Orissa for him, while Mir Abul Qāsim took up the vacant deputy governorship of Bengal at Dacca.

During Shujā's viceroyalty Bengal had the dubious happiness of being a country without a history, if history has been rightly defined by its greatest master in the modern world as "little more than the register of the crimes, follies and misfortunes of mankind." [Gibbon, ch. 3.] His position immediately below the Emperor, awed intending rebels into submission and envious rivals at Court into silence, and there was no foreign incursion worth notice in the province during his viceroyalty. How the terror of his name worked can be seen from the case of the kingdom of Hijli. Bahadur Khan, the zamindār of Hijli, held an extensive coastal district from the Rup Nārāyān to the Suvarna-rekhā river, and was the last of the Bāra Bhuiyās to be crushed. He still gloried in the lofty title of Masnad-i-'Ala of the age before the Mughal conquest and loved to regard himself as an independent Sultan, or as Father Sebastien Manrique was informed "the hereditary Emperor of the country". His estate was geographically included in the unsubdued and uncared-for subah of Orissa, and so he safely defied the governor of Bengal. But in 1651 when Shujā' held charge of Orissa in addition to Bengal, he quickly brought this proud Afghan to his senses. Waris, the Court chronicler of Shah Jahan writes,—"The zamindār of Hijli used to serve under the subahdār or Orissa and pay tribute. When the province of Orissa was assigned to Prince Muhammad Shujā' he demanded an enhancement of the former tribute. The zamindār delayed payment. Jān Beg, who was administering Orissa on behalf of Shujā', was ordered to arrest him and send a detachment to conquer Hijli. This was done, and Bahādur was kept in prison" at Dacca (?), but in the confusion caused by the war of succession in 1659, he escaped and recovered his estate. Mir Jumla had to subdue him again. (Waris, 50 b. Foster, *Eng. Factories* 1661-1664, p. 68).

In a letter written to Shah Jahan about March 1655. Shujā' boasts of his administrative success: "The zamindārs of Morang, Kachār and other places, who had never paid tribute to any of my predecessors, have sent me ambassadors with letters professing loyalty and obedience and some elephants by way of present. I have promoted cultivation in both the subahs. Orissa, which had been desolated by the oppression of my predecessors—has now turned its face to improvement".

The imperial peace maintained in Bengal during these twenty years led to a silent but steady growth of its wealth; trade expanded vastly as is proved by the increased business done by the Dutch—

and to a much lesser extent by the English, East India Companies. The harassment caused to the purchase and movement of goods by greedy local officers at every road station or toll-boundary, was got over by the English who secured from Shujā' a rescript exempting them from all dues and tolls on the payment of a lump sum of Rs 3,000 once every year.

When adding Orissa to his charge, Shah Jahan wrote to Shujā':— "As you prefer to live at Rajmahal, you ought to make an official tour of your province by proceeding from Rajmahal to Burdwan and thence to Medinipur. This last-named city is on the frontier of Orissa; you ought to call up there such of your officers from Orissa as you like and receive their accounts and reports about the country. From Medinipur you should go to Jahānābād (modern Ārāmbāgh) and thence to Sātgāon-Hughli and Makhsusābād, and finally return to Rājmahal. This will enable you to learn the condition of the country and the people, while enjoying hunting and sight-seeing on the way".

But Shujā' was not happy in Bengal. He complained to Shah Jahan that the climate even of Rājmahal was unhealthy and his children were constantly ailing there. He begged that a few villages of the healthier province of Patna might be given to him, so that he could leave his family there and administer Bengal in composure of mind about them. Rājmahal had very sad memories for him too. On 20th January 1640, a fire broke out there while a violent wind was blowing. The conflagration spread unchecked as the bungalows in the prince's harem area were built of wood and thatch for ensuring coolness, and they were quickly reduced to ashes. Seventy-five of his harem women were burnt to death, and many others were wounded in jumping down from the roofs to escape the fire. All his furniture and other property perished in the blaze.

Shujā's health was impaired by his twenty years' residence in Bengal, and in the end he lost the spirit of enterprise and capacity for persistent exertion for which he had been noted in early youth. This decline was promoted by his love of intellectual refinement and his aesthetic taste, till at last he ceased to be a man of action. "His constant devotion to pleasure and the easy administration of Bengal made him weak, indolent, and negligent, incapable of arduous toil, sustained effort, vigilant caution, or profound combination . . . Small things like the *chameli* flower escaped his eyes, as a writer of the time puts it . . . His mental powers were as keen as before; but they required great emergencies to call them forth and shone only by flashes; he was still capable of vigorous action, but only fitfully." (Sarkar. *History of Aurangzib*, i. ch. 19.) It used to be said in

Aurangzib's Court circle that Shujā' had turned Shi'a. The accusation is not true; but like Akbar and Shah Jahan, this prince also could not help appreciating the highly cultured and intellectual society of the many able Persian scholars and administrators whom he met with in Bengal, and his friendly association with them had the natural effect of softening any Sunni rigidity that he might have once possessed. The names of many of his officers in Bengal suggest that they were Persians and Shi'as. (Did they come from Persia by the now safer and more convenient sea-route directly to Bengal ?) His staunchest adherents were some Sayyids of Bārha, and these we know were Indian Shi'as.

In addition to leading a life of luxury and idleness, Shujā' when in Bengal set himself to accumulating treasure in order to be the better able to contest the Delhi throne against his brothers. This was exactly the policy of another princely viceroy of Bengal, A'zim-ush-shān the grandson of Aurangzib, at the beginning of the next century.

X. Shujā's fight for the Delhi throne

The inevitable struggle for the crown came about even before Shāh Jahān's death. On 6th September, 1657, that Emperor fell seriously ill, and though the doctors at last gained control over his disease, he was doomed to live henceforth as a bed-ridden invalid, and so he named Dārā Shukoh as his successor before his ministers. Immediately rumours spread throughout the empire that he was really dead and that Dārā had seized the Government and was using the State seal to issue orders in Shah Jahan's name. Each of his three younger sons, Shujā', Aurangzib and Murād Bakhsh in their respective subahs of Bengal, the Deccan and Gujrat, now prepared to fight for the throne. For some years before a common jealousy of their eldest brother Dārā and envy of the favours heaped on him and his sons by their father, had united the three in a correspondence to oppose him. Aurangzib and Murād formed a pact, sworn to on the Qurān, for uniting their armies, defeating Dārā and thereafter dividing the empire between themselves. The immense distance separating Rājmahal from Aurangābād prevented Aurangzib from making such a close alliance with Shujā', but a friendly understanding in general terms was effected between the two.

Moreover, five years before this, when Shujā' and Aurangzib were travelling together from Kābul to Agra before parting for their respective viceroyalties, they had talked of a close union of their interests in view of the future clash with their eldest

brother and had confirmed it by betrothing Aurangzib's eldest son Sultan Muhammad to Shujā's daughter Gulrukh Bānu.

Murād, giving out that Shah Jahan was already dead, crowned himself Emperor at Ahmadabad on 20th November 1657, marched out of his province on 13th March 1658, and joined his army to Aurangzib's in Malwa on 14th April, and the two together routed the armies of Dārā at Dharmāt (15th April) and Samugarh (29th May), captured Agra fort and made Shah Jahan a prisoner in it (8th June), while Dārā fled away to the Panjab and Sindh to be finally hunted down there.

Meanwhile Shujā' had crowned himself at Rājmahal (late in November, 1657) with the pompous title of Ābul Fauz Nasir-ud-din Muhammad, Timur II, Alexandar III, Shāh Shujā' Bahādur Ghāzi. Then he started from Bengal with a large but inexperienced army, an excellent park of artillery, and the highly useful flotilla of Bengal. After overrunning the province of Bihar on his way, he arrived near Benares by the river route about 24th January, 1658. Here his path was blocked by an imperial army sent from Agra under Dārā's eldest son Sulaimān Shukoh and the Rajput veteran Mirzā Raja Jai Singh Kachhwā. At Bahādurpur, on the steep right bank of the Ganges, some five miles north-east of Benares and close to the Mughal-Sarai end of the Dufferin Bridge, Shujā' formed an entrenched camp with his flotilla moored at hand. Sulaimān's army halted three miles further west.

The two sides spent some days in light skirmishes, during which Sulaimān carefully studied his enemy's position and habits and found out that they did not take even the ordinary military precaution of posting patrols round their camp and that Shujā' was a grossly negligent leader, who let things drift and slept till late in the morning, "on a couch hung round with mosquito curtains". Here early in the morning of the 14th February, Sulaimān made a surprise attack on Shujā's sleeping camp with complete success. "The Bengal soldiers after rubbing their sleepy eyes found that the enemy were already around them ; they had no time to put their tunics on, but took the shortest road to safety". In the wild panic that followed no opposition could be offered. Shujā' and his family as well as his principal officers escaped in their boats, but the entire camp with its tents, treasure, baggage, animals and field guns was captured by the victors. The Bengal *nawwāra* alone saved itself and saved many, because Sulaimān had no boats of his own. Shujā's own loss was estimated at fifty lakhs of rupees ; his chief minister Mirzā Jān Beg lost six lakhs worth of property in addition to his horses and elephants.

Even the humblest private had to abandon everything that he could not carry away on his person.

While the Bengal fleet sped down the Ganges, the major portion of Shujā's army fled on land by the chord line through Saserām to Patna, being plundered by the peasants and littering the road with their abandoned property and animals. The fugitive prince reached Mungir by way of Patna and Surajgarh, in April, and here he barred the narrow road to Bengal lying between the river on one side and the hills on the other. His stone rampart with guns mounted on them and the flotilla lying close behind, pulled Sulaimān up short, and forced him to halt at Surajgarh, 15 miles west of Mungir. On learning of Aurangzib's victory at Dharmāt, Sulaimān quickly made peace with Shujā' (*c.* 7 May 1658) and set out on his return to rejoin his father in Agra. It was agreed that Bengal, Orissa and Bihar east of Mungir should be left to Shujā', but his seat should be Rājmahal, as his presence at Mungir on his western frontier might act as a menace to the ruler of Delhi.

A month after this, Aurangzib who had by that time made himself sole monarch of Hindustan by treacherously imprisoning Murād Bakhsh (*c.* 25th June) and enthroning himself at Delhi, sent a conciliatory letter to Shujā' adding the province of Bihar to his charge, and promising more favours in future. He wrote, " As you had often before begged the Emperor Shah Jahan for the province of Bihar, I now add it to your viceroyalty. Pass some time peacefully in administering it and repairing your broken power. When I return after disposing of the affair of Dārā, I shall try to gratify your other wishes. Like a true brother, I shall not refuse you anything that you desire, be it land or money ". Shujā' sent a polite letter of thanks and prepared for war.

In the early autumn of 1658, while Aurangzib with his main army was deeply engaged in the pursuit of Dārā Shukoh in the far west, Shujā' decided to make a second bid for the Peacock Throne. To the objections of his army-chiefs and ministers he answered, " Aurangzib has left between this place and Agra no general strong enough to oppose me. If Prince Muhammad Sultān bars my path, I shall win him over, and by a rapid movement secure the person of Shah Jahan and restore the old government. And then I shall stay at Court as my father's obedient servant ".

At the end of October 1658 the Bengal army composed of 25,000 cavalry with artillery and a vast flotilla, set out westwards from Patna. Dārā's officers in the forts on the way surrendered them to Shujā' as instructed by their master, to prevent their falling into Aurangzib's hands. Rohtās, Chunār, Benares, and Allahabad opened

their gates to the Bengal subahdār, and even Jaunpur was captured by him. Advancing three marches beyond Allahabad, Shujā' reached Khajwā (in the Fathpur district, five miles southwest of the Bindki Road station on the E. I. R.) on 30th December 1658 and found his path closed by Aurangzib's army, which was joined by that Emperor himself and his ablest general Mir Jumla in a few days. Here on the 5th of January 1659 the decisive battle was fought and Shujā's last hopes crushed. The imperialists had a four to one numerical superiority over him and their war-hardened and ever-victorious troops made short work of Shujā's raw levies from the Bihar and Bengal peasantry. The Shujaites made only one wild charge, and when it broke down, they had no fight left in them. During the battle, Mir Jumla, seated on an elephant just behind that of Aurangzib as his right-hand man, offered him timely advice on the tactics. And after the victory a strong detachment was sent off from Khajwā to pursue Shujā' and conquer Bihar and Bengal for the new Emperor.

CHAPTER XVIII

MIR JUMLA IN BENGAL, 1659—1663

I. THE WAR ON THE GANGES

The pursuing force sent against Shujā' by Aurangzib was placed under the nominal leadership of Prince Muhammad Sultān; bur Mir Jumla was "the real commander, vested with the supreme power of control, dismissal and appointment." The luckless aspirant to the throne of Delhi reached Rājmahal in his flight, about 27th March. Mir Jumla arrived at Patna about 22nd February, 8 days after Shujā's departure from that city, frustrated Shujā's plan of making a stand at Mungir (19th Feb—6th March) and at Rāngāmāti (10th—24th March)—first, by making a detour through the Kharagpur hills with the help of Raja Bahroz and occupying Mungir (9th March), and, again outflanking Shujā' by another detour through Jhārkhand with the assistance of Khwaja Kamāl Afghān, zamindar of Birbhum, and passing through Suri (28th March). Though his army was depleted by the defection of 5000 Rajputs and two Muhammadan generals (end of March) on account of the false rumour of Dārā's victory at Ajmir (Deorāi), Mir Jumla steadily advanced against Shujā', and encamped on the bank of the Ganges at Belghātā, only 30 miles from Shujā's base at Rājmahal. That prince evacuated Rājmahal on 4th April, made Tāndā (4 miles west of Gaur) his headquarters and collected the flotilla of Bengal. Mir Jumla immediately occupied Rājmahal (13th April); the entire country on the west bank of the Ganges from Rājmahal to Hughli now passed into the hands of the imperialists.

Now, with the Ganges separating the rival forces, the war became essentially a naval contest in which Shujā' had certain manifest advantages over his pursuer. Mir Jumlā's army was a purely land force; he had no boats and could not expect to easily procure any on account of the scorched earth policy of Shujā', who could command a powerful flotilla. Mir Jumla was also very weak in artillery, having dragged only light pieces from Khajwa, whereas Shujā' had many big guns, admirably served by Portuguese and half-caste gunners of Hughli, Tamluk and Noākhāli. Hence Mir Jumla's posts

on the western bank of the river were vulnerable to Shujā's flotilla, mounted with artillery.

Undaunted by his new difficulties, Mir Jumla moved from Rajmahal to Dogāchi, 13 miles southwards and collecting a few boats, occupied a high island in midstream opposite the Shujāites. But, realising the impossibility of a surprise landing on the opposite bank in the presence of a strong and watchful enemy, he distributed the imperial army along the whole western bank between Rājmahal and Suti, with Prince Muhammad at Dogāchi and himself at Suti.

After a few successful *coups* on small bodies of Shujā's men, Mir Jumla met with serious failure on 3rd May, at the hands of the new Shujāite commander, Khān-i-'Ālām, who had concealed his men and fierce war elephants behind camouflaged ambuscades, in attacking which the imperial detachment and boats sent by Mir Jumla were totally cut off.

Before he could launch a fresh offensive, Mir Jumla had to halt and procure boats and materials from Hughli, Murshidabad and Burdwan. He seized all boats coming down the river and made a diplomatic use of his position as the Mughal general in his relations with the Dutch and the English factors as a counterpoise to the Portuguese support of Shujā'. Finding that a frontal attack would not succeed in dislodging Shujā' from his entrenched positions, Mir Jumla devised an encircling strategy against Shujā'. Accordingly he sent suitable instructions to Dāud Khan, Governor of Bihar, to recruit men, enlist the Mankali and Kākar leaders and some *pahalwāns* of Dārbhāngā and Mehsi, to collect boats, and then to attack Shujā' on the left bank of the Ganges and create a diversion in his own favour.

But before this plan could mature, a blow fell on the imperial army from an unexpected quarter. Prince Muhammad Sultān, left his post at Dogāchi and fled to Shujā' on the night of 8th June. The flight of the Prince was due to his love for Shujā's daughter and to his resentment against Mir Jumla's control. But Mir Jumla's born leadership of men saved the Delhi army and prevented the least disorder or dispersion. Firmly keeping his men pacified at Suti, the Mir rode to the Prince's deserted camp at Dogāchi, harangued a council of war, and gained the willing obedience of the troops there. Thus the army weathered the storm; it "lost only one man—the Prince". During the rainy season, Mir Jumla withdrew the posts at Dogāchi, Dunāpur and Suti, and concentrated his army only at two cantonments—one at Murshidabad (Ma'suma-

bāzār) under himself, and the other at Rājmahal under Zulfiqār Khan.

During the heavy rains and floods of Bengal, the initiative passed to Shujā', the master of a fleet. The two imperial camps became isolated by the rains. The exultant Prince of Bengal planned to starve the imperialists by blockading Rājmahal and intercepting supplies between it and Murshidabad and between Murshidabad and Hughlī. Mir Jumla for want of boats could do nothing to relieve Rājmahal. The ravages of flood and famine and the consequent loss of their horses and draught-cattle, reduced Mir Jumla's men at Rājmahal to dire straits; and the evil was aggravated by discord among the generals there. They evacuated Rājmahal when a raid was made on it by the Shujāites (22nd August). But during July-September, 1659, Mir Jumla's men occupied Hughli and Midnapur, owing to his supremacy on land.

At the end of the rains the rival forces faced each other near Belghātā and Giriyā on the bank of the Ganges. Here a strategic retreat by Shujā' to dupe Mir Jumla was followed by the latter's detour to Shujā's rear. The imperialists were, however, mown down by the furious cannonade of the Shujāite artillery commander, Mirzā Jān Beg. Without wasting his men and resources, Mir Jumla retired towards Murshidabad, hourly expecting Dāud Khan to effect the planned diversion. To cut off the Mir's retreat Shujā' crossed the Bhāgirathi and reached the ferry of Nashipur on the opposite bank. But, in the night of 26th December, he received the grave news that Dāud Khan had forced a passage across the Kosi by defeating the Bengal admiral, Khwāja Mishki, and was rapidly advancing on Tāndā.

Dāud Khan had sailed from Patna on 13th May to Qāzi-Keriā (opposite Bhāgalpur), where, after some naval encounters with Khwāja Mishki, he had been brought to an absolute halt by the flooded rivers, the Kosi, the Kālindi and the Mahānandā. After foiling a move by Shujā's admiral Khwāja Mishki and general Fidāi Khan to repel him, Dāud Khan made a wheeling movement from Qāzi-Keriā to Mungir in December, occupied Jahāngirā, routed Khwāja Mishki near Colgong, forced a passage across the Kosi and was joined by the Shujāite faujdār of Purnea. Then, crossing the Kālindi, the victorious governor of Bihar marched towards Mālda.

Shujā' retreated to Suti, being hotly pursued by Mir Jumla, who had long been waiting for this diversion. After an indecisive skirmish the luckless prince crossed to the eastern bank of the Ganges (9th January 1660). Mir Jumla promptly re-entered Rājmahal (11th January) and then with 160 boats brought by Dāud's son

crossed over to Samdah (17th January), which remained his head-quarters for six weeks. From here he tried to surround Shujā' from the Mālda side and intercept his route of southward retreat. The unsuccessful prince was deserted by his son-in-law Muhammad Sultān, who rejoined Mir Jumla and was doomed by Aurangzib to life-long captivity, in Gwalior fort. While Shujā' with sadly depleted forces was solely bent on defending the Samdah front, Mir Jumla frustrated his strategy by deceiving him by leaving a thin screen of men opposite, and himself making a wide detour to the more vulnerable eastern bank of the Mahānandā, and reaching Mālda (2nd March) 1660. His crowning stroke was the fording of that river at an ill-guarded point though with a terrible loss of men in the water. Shujā' fled on 6th April from Chauki-Mirdādpur to Tāndā and thence to Dacca. Mir Jumla left for Dacca on 19th April. Too weak either to chastise the zamindars who deserted him or to face the advancing imperial general, Shujā' forsook his eastern capital for ever on 6th May, in expectation of help from the Raja of Arakan, and Bengal passed into Aurangzib's possession with Mir Jumla's entry into Dacca on 9th May 1660.

II. Mir Jumla as Governor of Bengal

On receiving the news of Shujā's flight to Arakan, Aurangzib appointed Mir Jumla as Governor of Bengal in the mansab of 7000. That province was now sorely in need of an able administrator of the type of Mir Jumla, a man of lofty integrity, impartial justice and devotion to the welfare of the subjects. Aurangzib asked the Mir to efficiently administer the province, by pacifying the people, chastising the unruly, regulating the artillery and especially the *nawwāra* (flotilla), securing the safety of traffic on the roads and issuing well-planned regulations concerning various other matters, as well as the effective chastisement of the habitually refractory *zamindars* of the province and particularly the rulers of Assam and of the Maghs, who ill-treated and oppressed the Musalmans. Fresh honours were bestowed on him on the 44th birthday of Aurangzib (15th July, 1660). The new Viceroy received the titles of *Khan-i-Khānān* and *Sipahsālar* and his rank was further enhanced by 5000 troopers of his 7-*hazāri* command being made *du-āspa seh-āspa*.

Mir Jumla held the viceroyalty of Bengal for nearly three years (9th May, 1660—31st March, 1663). But he was present in the province for barely a year and a half, being, absent on campaign in Kuch Bihar and Assam from November, 1661. He reversed Shujā's

change, by transferring the capital of Bengal from Rājmahal to Dacca for keeping the Arakanese and Portuguese pirates in check. While at Dacca, he collected the revenue from the peasants with wisdom and moderation. As the *jāgirs* of the *mansabdars* were situated in different *parganas*, and there were many co-partners, the ryots there were subject to oppression, the method of collection of revenue was wasteful and the *parganas* became desolate. Mir Jumla confirmed in his own *jāgirs* many virtuous freeholders (*aimadārs*) and stipend-holders and some others who had received *farmāns* from the Emperor. But Qāzi Rizavi, the Sadar, cancelled other persons' *madad-i-ma'āsh* grants and pensions in the crownlands and *jāgirs*, and resumed their lands to the State. The *aimadārs* were ordered to till the lands and pay revenue. But as the hard-pressed *aimadārs* did not cultivate the lands, there was no gain in revenue. The *zakāt* (one-fortieth of the annual income) continued to be collected from merchants and travellers and customs (*hāsil*) from artificers, tradesmen and *khushnashin* (well-to-do men), Hindus and Muslims alike. In many *parganas* the officers of the crownlands or the jāgirdār or the *zamindār* used to seize the property and even the wife and daughters of any person, ryot or newcomer, dying without leaving any son. Suspecting Mullā Mustafa, the Qāzi of Dacca to be a bribe-taker and the Mir'Adl to be a parasite, Mir Jumla expelled them from the town and personally administered justice in both religious and secular affairs.

He assisted the Orissa governor Khan-i-Daurān in subduing Bahādur Khan, the rebel *zamindar* of Hijli (6th May, 1661) who had escaped from prison during the civil war. After the Mir's death, the Balasore factors observed (28th April, 1663) that the Governors "in these parts", on account of the "long absence and distance" of the Nawāb (Mir Jumla) have been insolent and illimitable in their exactions that they had very much impaired the trade here." They expected a remedy of it if the Khan-i-Khānān had lived. Mir Jumla put pressure on the Dutch to send a ship to Arakan in pursuit of Shujā'. Fully alive to the gravity of the Magh menace to Bengal, he made a plan for undertaking a campaign to subdue them, but had to postpone the project till the conclusion of his expedition against Kuch Bihar and Assam.

During Mir Jumla's absence in Assam a severe famine visited Bengal, which lasted in some form for two years. The price of grain rose owing to the high rate of *zakāt* or compulsory alms, the virtual suspension of movements of merchants on account of internal insecurity, the grasping habits of the *chowkidārs* and the oppression of the *rāhdārs* (toll-collectors). The distress of the people became

so acute that, in the words of Tālish, "Life appeared to be cheaper than bread, and bread was not to be found".

This warrior-viceroy could not deal effectively with certain administrative problems of Bengal, the solution of which had become urgently necessary, especially the rebuilding of the flotilla (*nawwāra*). With a view to reorganising the navy, Mir Jumla abolished the old system of management, but before he could start a new one, he had to set out on the fatal Assam campaign. Many naval officers and men died in the course of that war and the flotilla was utterly ruined by the time of the death of Mir Jumla. This led to an aggravation of the menace of piracy of the Maghs and the Portuguese and Shāista Khan had to create a virtually new flotilla.

The basis of Mir Jumla's financial system in Bengal was monopoly. He endeavoured to become the sole stockist of all articles of necessity and then sell them at enhanced prices. About 1660 he offered to supply the English factors every year with as much saltpetre as they required. On the eve of the Kuch Bihar and Assam campaigns he exacted Rs 25,000 (out of a total demand of Rs 50,000) from the grain merchants of Dacca as something like the excess profits tax of modern times, by adopting severely coercive measures. The city bankers forewarned by such severity, offered a sum of 3 lakhs.

A dispute arose between the government of Mir Jumla and the English factors, as the latter refused to pay either the Rs 3,000 demanded (1658) by the Governor of Hughli in lieu of annual customs, or the anchorage charges demanded in the next year by the faujdār of Balasore. In 1660-1 the exasperated English agent at Hughli audaciously seized a country vessel of the Mir as a security for the recovery of their debts. The incensed Governor demanded reparation and threatened to destroy the out-agencies, to seize the factory at Hughli and expel the English from the province. However, on the advice of the Madras authorities, Agent Trevisa restored the boat and apologised to the Governor. But the latter continued to exact the annual payment of Rs 3000.[1]

Every year Mir Jumla used to utilise the services of the English and their ships in sending his articles (*e.g.*, gumlac) to Persia without paying any freight or customs. By way of investing his capital and getting goods in return he lent large sums of money (Rs 76,000) to

[1] "The Nabob (Mir Jumla) doth indeavour to ingrosse all commodities in Bengal (whereof we hinted something to you two year ago". Madras to Company (29th June, 1662) E. F. I. XI. 67; see *Cont.* 127a; his exaction in Dutch records, quoted in Moreland, *Akbar to Aurangzib*, 292.

Trevisa, the English agent in Bengal. A part of the loan was not cleared before the death of the Governor.

While the Dutch offered help to Mir Jumla against Shujā', the English factors followed a policy of 'wait and see'. The Mir ordered the Governor of Balasore to send up Trevisa to Hughli and to levy a duty of 4% on all English exports, besides anchorage duties on their ships. By end of November, 1659, the trade of the English was practically brought to a standstill. Finally, after an agreement with Trevisa for the restoration of his seized junk and the settlement of the question of compensation by arbitration, Mir Jumla granted him a *dastak* or *parwana* (9th February, 1660) confirming the privileges previously granted to the English by Shah Jahān and Shah Shujā'.

As Governor of Bengal, Mir Jumla continued his earlier policy of diluting firmness with opportunism in his dealings with the English. He used the junk incident as a lever for securing the English company's help in his measures against the fugitive Shujā'. But, as his claims re: the junk were not satisfactorily settled, he stopped their trade at Qāsimbāzār and in the Bay (middle of 1660). At his command Trevisa met him at Dacca; and 15,000 mds of saltpetre procured from Patna by the English but so long lying frozen, were released for shipment in Bengal. He also used the services of Englishmen, such as Mr. Dortson (or Captain Durson) and Thomas Pritt, Dutchmen, Portuguese, and their ships for his military and other purposes. Certain Muscovites (and Armenians also) served in the Mughal army in Mir Jumla's Kuch Bihar and Assam campaigns.

III. Mir Jumla's conquest of Kuch Bihar and Assam, 1661—1663.

The Assam expedition of Mir Jumla unfolded itself like a Greek tragedy. Here all the wisdom and energy of a superman were foiled by an invisible Fate. His splendid conquests of two large and rich kingdoms within the space of three months were snatched away from him and the thread of his life was cut off amidst misery and chaos not by any human foe, but by the elemental forces of flood, famine, and pestilence. The unbroken triumphs of his life brought to him in the end only dust and ashes. Hence his admiring historian Shihāb-ud-din Muhammad Tālish has rightly named his narrative of Mir Jumla's last wars as *Fathiyya-i-i'briyya*, or conquests that serve as a warning about the emptiness of human glory.

This district of Kāmrup had once been an integral part of the Kuch Bihar kingdom, but it was separated from its parent State in

1581 in order to form an appanage for a younger branch of the Kuch royal family. When that branch was expelled from Kāmrup and the district was annexed by the Mughals (1612), the Raja of Kuch Bihar began to look wistfully at this lost possession of his house. Hence, when the rumour spread that Shah Jahan was dead and Shujā' had left Bengal with his troops for contesting the throne, and the province was threatened with a worse civil war and dissolution of government than that during Shah Jahan's incursion of 1624, Prān Nārāyan, the Raja of Kuch Bihar (r. 1633-1666) sent his minister Bhabanāth Kārji to recover Kāmrup. Crossing the Sankosh river on his eastern boundary, Bhabanāth attacked Durlabh Nārāyan (the son of Uttam Nārāyan), a Mughal vassal and the zamindar of Barnagar in the modern Goālpārā district, north of the Brahmaputra. The latter was defeated, and fled away to the Ahom kingdom. Mir Lutfullah Shirāzi, the imperial faujdār of Gauhati, sent his son Jhārunā (Zākirullah ?) to oppose the invader, but without success. Just at the same time the Ahom nobles posted on the Bengal frontier, began to collect boats and build bridges for an invasion at Kajali (where the Kalang river falls into the Brahmaputra on its south side.) Lutfullah, too weak to meet the attack of such immense numbers from two sides at once, fled away to Dacca, and Gauhati was captured by the Ahoms without a blow. Thus the Mughal authority was wiped out on both banks of the Brahmaputra. This happened in March 1659. After some months of skirmishing and futile negotiations for a partition of conquests, between the Kuch and the Ahom kings, the Kuch Bihar forces were driven out of Kāmrup and both banks of the great river passed into Ahom hands, by the month of March 1660.

After the expulsion of Shujā from Dacca, Mir Jumla was appointed governor of Bengal (June 1660) and ordered to punish the kings of Kuch Bihar and Assam. He made his war preparations on a grand scale, and left Dacca on 1st November 1661, with an army of 12,000 horse and 30,000 foot, a vast flotilla of war boats and supply vessels and a powerful artillery. Many European sailors and gunners—mostly Portuguese with some Dutch and English also, accompanied him. On land and water alike the imperialists were irresistible.

Advancing slowly by cutting the dense bamboo groves on the way, the Mughal army entered the capital of Kuch Bihar on 19th December and found it deserted by its Raja and people in terror. The kingdom was annexed to the Mughal empire, coins were struck in Aurangzib's name, and the city's name was changed to Alamgirnagar. After making arrangements for the peaceful administration

of the Kuch country and leaving Isfandiyār Beg to garrison the capital, Mir Jumla set out for the conquest of Assam on 4th January 1662. On account of the jungles and numerous *nālās* to be crossed on the way, his daily progress did not exceed four or five miles. The soldiers had to go through unspeakable hardship and fatigue, which the viceroy-commander-in-chief shared with the meanest private. The Ahom army, devastated by cholera and paralysed by the jealousy of its other generals for a royal favourite (Bez Dalai Phukan) who had been put in authority at Gauhati, continually retreated before the invaders, and wherever it made a stand was defeated with heavy slaughter. Several of the feudal barons of Assam living on that side deserted to the Mughals. In a river-battle fought in the night of 3rd March 1662, the Ahom naval power was annihilated and 300 of their boats were seized.

In this way, Mir Jumla triumphantly marched into Garh-gāon the Ahom capital on 17th March. Raja Jayadhwaj, (r. 1648-1663) had fled away to the eastern hills abandoning his capital and all his property. The spoils taken by the Mughals here were immense: 82 elephants, 3 lakhs of rupees in cash, 675 pieces of artillery, 1343 camel-swivels, 1200 Rāmchangis, 6750 match-locks, 340 maunds of gunpowder, over a thousand boats, and 173 stores of paddy.

IV. Victorious Mughals besieged in Ahom capital, 1662

But by his lightning advance the Mughal general had conquered only the soil of the capital, and neither the king nor the country. So, in view of the early and heavy rains of Assam, Mir Jumla halted there. The fleet under admiral Ibn Husain had to stop at Lakhau, some eighteen miles north-west, where the anchorage was deep enough for the big gun-boats. The viceroy with the main army went into quarters at Mathurāpur, a village on a higher ground, seven miles south-east of Garhgāon (31st March 1662), while the Ahom capital with its countless spoils of war was held by a strong garrison under Mir Murtaza. Many outposts were set up on land, while from Lakhau the line of communications was kept open westwards to Gauhati and from Gauhati south to Dacca. The Ahom forces were concentrated in the mountains south of Garhgāon and the huge island of Majhuli west of that city.

Early in May the rain began to fall in torrents, the rivers rose in flood, and Mir Jumla was cut off from his fleet and base of supplies. In fact, during the entire rainy season, the Mughal army in Assam lived in a state of siege; each of its posts stood like an island surrounded by the flooded country, the few raised paths

(*āli*) being held by the enemy. In their cantonments, on some days the tents were flooded and horse and man had to stand knee-deep in water. For lack of proper fodder, cavalry horses and draught cattle alike perished by the thousand.

During this state of "siege by water", the Ahoms drove out several of the Mughal outposts, and then concentrating near Garhgāon kept the imperialists there in perpetual alarm by their frequent night attacks.

As the monsoon grew to its full violence, it became impossible for the imperialists to issue from any outpost or send support to it. Mir Jumla, therefore, withdrew all his *thānas*. The Ahom king recovered all his country east of Lakhau, and the Mughals held only Garhgāon and Mathurāpur, besides the harbour of Lakhau. Despair seized the hearts of the Hindustani soldiers thus stranded in Assam.

The vigour of Ahom attack was now redoubled; their king came down from the Nāmrup hills (in the extreme east) and took post only four days' march from Garhgāon; he appointed the Bāduli Phukan as his prime minister and commander-in-chief and sent him to destroy the foreign invaders. But his attacks on Mathurāpur and Garhgāon were beaten off—especially two assaults in force on the capital on 8th July and 12th July, though the garrison had to be ever on the alert. But from the middle of July the defenders began to make vigorous sorties and destroy the enemy posts in the neighbourhood. The imperialists were thus gaining repose and confidence again, when in August a terrible epidemic of fever and flux broke in Mathurāpur. Hundreds of soldiers and followers perished daily; (Dilir Khan's corps of 1500 Afghans was reduced to 450 men.) In the Mughal camp no suitable diet or comfort or even medicine was available for the sick; all had to live on coarse rice. The Hindustani and Turki cavaliers languished for want of wheaten bread, their horses died of eating rice. At last life at Mathurāpur became unbearable, and the army evacuated it for Garhgāon (on 17th August), abandoning many of their sick comrades for lack of transport.

The exultant Ahoms renewed their attacks on Garhgāon and there was fighting every night outside that fort. But Mughal vigour triumphed in the end, and after the crushing defeat of a night attack on 15th September the Ahoms grew quiet. But the refugees from Mathurāpur had infected the garrison of Garhgāon, where the pestilence now reached its extreme, to which famine of every foodstuff except coarse rice was added. Mir Jumla lived and fed like the commonest soldier, though he had a store of delicacies.

By the end of September the worst was over; the rain decreased, the flood went down, the roads reappeared, and in a few days the long-suffering garrison received cheering news from their fleet at Lakhau. In truth, through all these dark months of alarm, suspense and despair, the Mughal navy under Ibn Husain had saved itself and thus saved the army beleaguered in far away Garhgāon, by maintaining its mastery of the Brahmaputra and safeguarding the communications with Bengal. Ibn Husain reestablished the outpost at Devalgāon (halfway to Garhgāon) and Mir Jumla pushed up a detachment under Abul Hasan which joined hands with the navy at Devalgāon. Large quantities of provisions sent from Lakhau by land and water under escort, reached Garhgāon on 24th and 31st October respectively, and plenty now took the place of famine. The land having dried, the Mughal cavalry again became irresistible, and Raja Jayadhwaj and his nobles fled to the hills of Nāmrup a second time.

V. Mir Jumla's last movements and death

Mir Jumla now resumed the offensive, to track the Raja down to his lair in Nāmrup, moving by land and water. Leaving Garhgāon on 16th November 1662, he reached the Dihing river in four days, and then marched by way of Salāguri to Tipam on the other bank of that river (18th December). This was destined to be the furthest point of his advance.

On 20th November he had a fainting fit, but he clung tenaciously to his purpose and continued to lead the army. The Bāduli Phukan came over to the Mughals and was made their viceroy for Eastern Assam. More Ahom nobles followed this disloyal example. But on 10th December Mir Jumla was struck down by a burning fever to which pleurisy was soon added. His soldiers and officers alike refused to advance further into that baleful country and plotted to leave him there and return home. Dilir Khan quieted them and at the same time induced Mir Jumla to make peace with the Ahom king and return to Bengal. The terms agreed to were: (1) The Ahom king would deliver immediately a war-indemnity of 20,000 *tolas* of gold, 120,000 *tolas* of silver, and 40 elephants. (2) During the next twelve months he would deliver the balance of the indemnity. viz., three hundred thousand *tolas* of silver and 90 elephants in three equal instalments. (3) All Assam west of the Bharali river on the north bank of the Brahmaputra and west of the Kalang river on the south was to be annexed to the Mughal empire. Thus the Mughals were to get more than half

the province of Darrang, so rich in elephants, and Dimāruā, Beltalā and the kingdom of the Nāk-kāti Rāni adjoining the Gāro hills. (4) Jayadhwaj would send a daughter to the imperial harem. (5) From the second year after the treaty, he would pay an annual tribute of twenty elephants. In addition, all Mughal subjects carried off by the Ahoms were to be released, and the sons of the four highest nobles of Assam were to be surrendered to the governor of Dacca to be held as hostages for the full execution of the treaty.

The Ahom princess, hostages and some gold, silver and elephants as part of the indemnity having reached Mir Jumla's camp, he set out on his return on 10th January 1663, travelling by *pālki* owing to his illness, which daily increased. At Baritalā he embarked in a boat and glided down the river towards Dacca, dying on 31st March near Khizirpur, a few miles short of Dacca.

The Mughal thanas were safely withdrawn from the country restored to the Ahom king, and the retreat of the army and navy alike was effected skilfully and cautiously, without any loss. On paper Mir Jumla's last campaign was a success, though he lost his life in it. The shock of the Mughal invasion impaired the fabric of the Ahom State, the feudatories became refractory to their Raja, the population was woefully thinned by war, famine and plague, and Jayadhwaj himself died a broken down man only eight months after Mir Jumla's return. But Kuch Bihar had been recovered by its Raja and the Mughal garrison expelled while Mir Jumla was isolated at Garhgāon.

For sometime after Mir Jumla's death (on 31st March 1663), Ihtishām Khan continued to be in charge of the general administration in Bengal and Rāi Bhagwati Dās of revenue affairs. After Ihtishām's departure for the imperial court with the late viceroy's property, Dilir Khan was commissioned to act as the Governor of Bengal till the arrival of Dāud Khan from Bihar, and the last-named to officiate as the Governor., pending the arrival of the permanent incumbent, Shāista Khan. Mir Jumla's death was followed by a general wave of laxity and disorder in the government of Bengal. Even the expedition for the recovery of Kuch Bihar was postponed. The death of Mir Jumla, whose *parwāna* had regulated the E.I.C's affairs both in Bihar and Bengal and protected the English traders against all claims of customs, naturally raised the question of the legality of their right to this exemption, as his *parwāna* now ceased to operate, and as the old *farmān* of Shah Jahan on which they based their claim had not been confirmed and renewed by Aurangzib. Freed from the wholesome restraint of Mir Jumla, the officers in Bengal and Bihar began to demand customs from the English.

CHAPTER XIX

THE PORTUGUESE IN BENGAL

Vasco da Gama did not sail for an unknown land when he left Belem with his valiant band in the summer of 1497. India was not a *terra incognita* to the people of the west. For countless ages the route overland had been used by scores of travellers and traders. Only ten years earlier Cavilhão,[1] a compatriot of Vasco, had sailed from Aden to Cannanore, to find a passage across the sea, from Calicut to Africa where he gathered valuable information about Madagascar and a wide stretch of the coast opposite. He was not destined to see his country again, but the results of his labours were not lost to his countrymen. A faithful friend carried Cavilhão's report to Lisbon. The once dreaded waters beyond Cape Non had no longer any terror for the Portuguese seamen. Sailor after sailor had dauntlessly defied the perils of the unknown for six decades and more, and crept along the west coast of Africa from cape to cape, creek to creek, carefully noting the prominent landmarks, rivers, islets and harbours as they pushed on further and further, until the southernmost limit was reached, and the eastern shores espied. The success of Gama's voyage had been amply assured by the exploits of his precursors. The task set by Prince Henry the Navigator was accomplished when Vasco cast his anchor off Calicut.

Knowledge for its own sake, adventures for their perils alone, had no appeal to Vasco and his friends. They were after the good things of this world, and would secure, if they could, the blessings of the next. They came to this country in quest of commerce and Christians. Of Christians there were but few in this pagan land and that mysterious prince, Prester John of the popular legends, was not to be found in India. But the Portuguese were not disappointed. If their evangelical zeal met with a set-back, their acquisitive instincts were more than gratified in the rich marts of Malabar. Vasco da Gama had his own standard of business morality. If peaceful traffic proved less profitable, he readily indulged in the use of sword and fire. Human beings and their manufactures were to him equally lucrative and legitimate articles of commerce. What he and his countrymen wanted was a monopoly of the eastern trade

[1] Danvers, *The Portuguese in India*, Vol. I, pp 29-32.

and for twenty years Gama and Cabral, Almeida and Albuquerque, ruthlessly exploited the region of their first visit.

It was not long before other areas claimed their greedy attention. The goods of Bengal were not unknown in the markets recently captured by them, but they found their way to Malabar in crafts other than Portuguese, and the profit went to swell unchristian pockets. Albuquerque had already dwelt upon the bright prospects that trade with Bengal offered in a letter to his king and master, but it was left to his successor, Lopo Soares de Albergaria, to send an expedition to the Bay, and in 1518, Dom João de Silveira appeared with four ships before the bar of Chittagong. He had been shortly preceded there by João Coelho, another Portuguese agent. In 1517 Fernao Peres d'Andrade had been commissioned to explore the Bay of Bengal and the neighbouring country, but lured by the reported wealth of the Far East, he sailed first to Sumatra and thence steered his course for the ports of the Celestial Empire, postponing his visit to Bengal for a future date. On the return journey, he sent João Coelho to his original destination, and Coelho arrived at Chittagong, a passenger in a Moorish boat, a few days earlier than Silveira. The first Portuguese mission to Bengal, however, proved a failure. Barros and other Portuguese historians found a satisfactory explanation of Silveira's ill-success in the habitual treachery and innate wickedness of the Bengalee character, but the Portuguese had to thank themselves alone for the cold reception they met with in Bengal.

Silveira had encountered two merchant-men on his way to the Maldives, and promptly made prizes of them. One of the captured boats belonged to a Muslim merchant, Golam Ali (Gromalle), known to be a relative of the Governor of Chittagong, who himself was interested in the other. As he was apparently unfamiliar with the waters he was to navigate, the Portuguese captain pressed into his service a pilot from the boats he had seized and took into his confidence a youngman, who introduced himself as the pilot's brother-in-law. No wonder that his strange misdeeds on the high seas, which ill-accorded with the peaceful character of his professed mission, were no secret to the Governor of Chittagong when Silveira arrived there, and the appearance of two Portuguese agents in quick succession, from opposite quarters, gave ample room for suspicion. The Muslim captain with whom Coelho found a passage, gave him a good character, but Silveira's action. as reported to the Governor, had all the appearance of piracy. He was accordingly considered to be an undesirable visitor, though Coelho experienced nothing but kindness and courtesy during his brief residence in Bengal. It

will be unfair to assume that the high-handed dealings of Gama and Cabral had not been reported by the merchants of Western India to their friends and partners in Bengal. The consequence was inevitable. Silveira was suspected to be a pirate and treated as such, and he had to fight "desperately", as we learn from a Portuguese official report,[1] against the "perverse" people of Bengal, who obstinately refused to do any business with him. Silveira found himself in an unenviable plight. He dared not leave the inhospitable shores until the monsoon was over, and he could not find the provision he needed by fair purchase.

It may well be asked why the Portuguese captain began his voyage with a highly indiscreet, if not positively unfriendly proceeding, which was liable to be unfavourably construed by the very people whose good opinion it was apparently his interest to cultivate. The answer is not far to seek. The sovereignty of the eastern seas pertained by virtue of a papal grant to the Portuguese crown, and the king of Portugal had solemnly assumed the title of "Lord of the Navigation, Conquests and Trade of Aethiopia, Arabia, Persia and India"[2]. According to Portuguese way if thinking, every Portuguese captain was not only competent, but obliged to exercise the authority that the title connoted. It never occurred to them that the papal Bull might not possibly have any legal or moral sanction in countries outside His Holiness's spiritual jurisdiction. But in the Portuguese eyes, there was an additional justification for the policy pursued by their officers in the east. Nothing was unfair to a fanatical Christian, and fanaticism was the order of the day, particularly in the comparatively less civilised lands of the west, when a Moor or Muslim happened to be the victim. They had waged a long and bitter war against the Moor in their native country, and Portuguese patriotism and Portuguese piety equally demanded the extermination of the hated Moor in the neighbouring tracts of Africa. Commercial rivalry added further zest to racial hatred and religious aversion, and a Moor was considered to be a fair prey wherever encountered. The Indian export trade was, in those days, mostly in Muslim hands and the Portuguese captains made it their business to sweep the Muslim merchantmen out of Indian waters. Moreover, the tradition left by the early Portuguese explorers had a sinister influence on the naval practice of their successors, who willingly emulated their pernicious example. While navigating the eastern waters of the Atlantic, the Portuguese captains often found

[1] Sen, *Early Career of Kanhoji Angria and other Papers*, pp. 88-95.
[2] Danvers, *The Portuguese in India*, Vol. I, p. 77.

it necessary to requisition the unwilling services of the natives of the neighbouring coast. Raiding parties were usually sent to bring captives of all ages and sexes, and the more intelligent of the unfortunate prisoners were employed as pilots, guides and interpreters, while the rest were sold into slavery.[1] In justice to the Portuguese, it must be admitted that some of the Negroes were converted into Christianity, given a good education, married in Portuguese families and more or less imperceptibly absorbed in Portuguese society. But it cannot be doubted that the great majority suffered all the afflictions of exile and slavery for no fault of their own. Silveira was, therefore, behaving according to the normal code of Cadamosto and Cão, Gomes and Dias, when he made prizes of the Gujrat-bound boats from Bengal and pressed into his service the pilot and his youthful relative, not suspecting for a moment that they might not prove so submissive and obliging as the less sophisticated and more helpless people of Nigeria and Gambia. With a strange and perverse consistency, the Portuguese continued to offend the susceptibilities of a civilised society and a cultured court by their failure to conform to the higher standard of international conduct prevailing in India, and most of their misfortunes in Bengal were due to lawless habits contracted with impunity in the congenial climes of the "dark" continent.

To return to our story, Silveira sailed back after a season of futile fighting and useless hostility, and nothing notable happened until 1526, when Ruy Vaz Pereira visited Chittagong and captured a galliot owned by a rich Persian merchant, Khajah Shihab-ud-din, (Coge Sabadim) with all its cargo. It was alleged that piracy was committed by vessels built and fitted up after the Portuguese pattern and the blame was fastened on the unoffending Portuguese, while the real culprit went scot-free. Khajah Shihab-ud-din's boat had all the appearance of such a corsair and Pereira professed to have acted in the interest of his own countrymen and all honest traders when he seized the wolf masquerading in a lamb's garp.[2]

Ill winds brought the next Portuguese visitor of note in 1528. Martim Affonso de Mello Jusarte was cruising off Ceylon with a squadron of eight vessels when a violent storm scattered his fleet, and drove his boat to the eastern shores of the Bay of Bengal. De Mello found himself ship-wrecked on the coast of Pegu, and made his way in a frail barque to a sandy bank where he and his men suffered the extremes of hunger and thirst. At last some fishermen

[1] Prestage. *The Portuguese Pioneers*, p. 101.

[2] Campos, *History of the Portuguese in Bengal*, pp. 30-31.

offered to guide them to Chittagong, but either by design or by mistake took them to Chakaria (on the Matamuhari river. 50 miles from Chittagong under the Head-Quarters sub-division, Chakaria still claims some importance, having a police station, sub-registery and telegraph office) where Khuda Bakhsh Khan (Codovascam), the local chieftain unceremoniously threw them into prison. According to the Portuguese accounts, Khuda Bakhsh offered them liberty in lieu of their military services in a feud he had with an unfriendly neighbour. The battle was fought and won but there was no improvement in the lot of the unhappy prisoners. Khuda Bakhsh transferred them to his headquarters further inland in breach of his plighted word. Meanwhile, two of De Mello's lieutenants arrived at Chakaria but their efforts to ransom him proved of no avail, while an attempted flight resulted in greater rigours and De Mello's nephew, an immature youth of charming looks was permitted to be brutally sacrificed by the local Brahmans. When things looked their ugliest, relief came from an unexpected quarter. Khajah Shihab-ud-din, that Persian merchant of whose ship Pereira had made a prize at Chittagong, now interceded with the chieftain of Chakaria rightly expecting that success would be rewarded with the release of his boat and chattels. It was through his good offices that De Mello was at last ransomed at the not inconsiderable price of £ 1,500, and sent to Goa where he arrived in 1530, after two years of misery and misfortune.

One good turn deserved another and Nuno da Cunha, the Portuguese governor, readily agreed to send another trading and diplomatic mission to Bengal when Shihab-ud-din approached him with a request to that effect. The Persian had some difficulties with the court of Gaur and would fain shake off the dust of Bengal. He proposed to take a berth in a Portuguese boat bound for Ormuz, and offered in return, to use his influence with the grandees of Gaur to secure for his Portuguese friends the much coveted license for building factories and forts at Chittagong and other sites. Da Cunha appointed Martim Affonso de Mello Jusarte to head the expedition, and he sailed with five ships and two hundred men to reach Bengal for a second time in 1533. He was received well by the governor of Chittagong and started unloading his cargo. But it appears that all his past experiences had been completely lost on him and, instead of trying to win the confidence of the local authorities by fair dealing, de Mello did his best to alienate them by fraudulently smuggling his goods to avoid paying the excessive custom duties levied at the port. He was equally imprudent in the choice of his presents for the Sultan. Duarte de Azevedo, his

envoy, did indeed take with him fine horses, rich brocades and other gifts to the value of £1200 to Mahmud Shah's capital. If it was his intention to create a sensation by the variety and wealth of his presents, he achieved an astounding success. Rarely is a king expected to accept stolen goods and among the presents offered to the Sultan were found several bottles of scented water known to have come from a Muslim merchantman recently plundered by a notorious Portuguese pirate, Damião Bernaldes, and neither De Mello nor Azevedo had deemed it necessary to take the elementary precaution of removing from the offensive packets the labels of the original owner.[1] The Sultan drew the obvious conclusion, and ordered the buccaneers, for as such Azevedo and his colleagues had appeared to him, to be beheaded. The pleading of a Muslim saint is said to have saved the Portuguese from that dire end and they were consigned to a dungeon which Barros likens to the inferno (hell). At the same time the governor of Chittagong had been instructed to seize the Portuguese and their goods. He would have been perfectly within his rights if he had called De Mello and his associates to account for the frauds they had practised, but instead, of placing them under arrest in a straightforward manner, the governor preferred to resort to the safer, but more dubious methods of those days. The unsuspecting offenders were invited to a banquet, and all, but a few, who preferred the diversions of a hunt to the pleasures of a feast, readily stepped into the trap. Despite the desperate defence they offered, thirty of the Portuguese, including De Mello, were neatly secured after ten had lost their lives and the prisoners were sent to Gaur to share the fate of the envoy and his staff. The Portuguese historians are loud in their denunciation of what they, in their wrath, describe, as a treacherous massacre of innocent guests, but it cannot be gainsaid that De Mello and his colleagues had richly deserved incarceration though the questionable method of apprehending the culprits, and the consequent casualty gave an altogether different colouring to the incident.

The masterful spirit of Nuno da Cunha would not brook such an insult to the Portuguese power, and Antonio da Silva Menezes was promptly sent to Bengal, at the head of a powerful fleet, to demand an explanation of the extraordinary treatment that friendly envoys had received at the court of Gaur, and to obtain the release of Martim Affonso de Mello and his men by peaceful persuasion. if possible, and by force, if necessary (1534). On his arrival at Chittagong da Silva Menezes sent an envoy to Gaur with his

[1] Whiteway—*The Rise of the Portuguese Power in India*, pp. 232-234.

master's message, but when a month elapsed before a reply arrived, he set fire to Chittagong and put a large number of the Sultan's people to the sword. Violence was not calculated to improve the embittered relations and Diogo Rebello who arrived at Satgaon shortly afterwards (1535) tried a peaceful blockade. His representatives received a better hearing at Gaur, not because the Sultan had repented of his past policy, or the naval demonstrations of the Portuguese had made any impression, but because Mahmud Shah had for sometime past been anxiously looking for new allies against the powerful aggression of Sher Khan Suri. Drowning men clutch at straws. The Sultan promptly released his prisoners, and Martim Affonso suddenly found himself in the honoured position of a trusted military adviser of the king of Bengal. In the war that followed, the Portuguese are said to have performed wonders of valour, but neither their bravery, nor their skill, vitally influenced the course of events and Mahmud Shah had to purchase peace on the terms dictated by his inexorable enemy. Everybody knew that Sher was not likely to rest on his oars longer than was necessary, and Bengal would once again have to experience the terrors of a cruel invasion in the near future. Affonso Vas de Britto, who visited Bengal in 1538, brought the disappointing news that the Portuguese were too much embroiled in Gujarat to be of any service to the king of Bengal. The inevitable followed. Mahmud Shah was chased out of Gaur and died of his wounds. Humayun was outmanœuvred and worsted. Sher became the King of Delhi and sovereign of Bengal. But the Portuguese had gained their end before the final discomfiture of their ally. Mahmud Shah in his anxiety to enlist their support had permitted the Portuguese to build factories at Satgaon and Chittagong, the "porto pequeno" (little port) and the "porto grande" (great port) of the Portuguese historians. The conclusion of the war which proved so disastrous for their allies found the Portuguese securely established at both the places with custom houses of their own. In fact when the local nobles contended with Sher Shah's nominee for the possession of Chittagong, Nuno Fernandes Freire, the officer in charge of the Portuguese custom house, conceived the bold project of seizing the town and the harbour in the name of his king, and Castanheda holds that had Freire received the support he deserved from Vasco Peres de Sampayo (who had arrived with nine vessels in 1538 too late to defend Mahmud Shah's cause) his scheme might have been successfully carried out. After an armed skirmish with some Moors, Sampayo left for Pegu and died there. With his passing away ends the first chapter in the history of the Portuguese infiltration in Bengal.

II.

The next twenty years form a blank in our history. Not that the restless spirit of the Portuguese knew any respite. Their trading vessels continued to visit the ports of the east, and their Captains, doubtless, made up for any deficiency in their legitimate profit by their usual filibustering operations. The Portuguese historians found nothing worth recording during these two decades and the chroniclers of the country did not as yet take any notice of the new-comers. But something must have happened in the meantime to demand a revision and reorientation of the commercial policy of the Portuguese in Bengal, for in 1559 we find a deliberate attempt on their part to divert the trade of Chittagong to another port. Quite likely the Portuguese were not pulling on well with the new masters of Chittagong. Some light is thrown on this obscure point by a treaty rescued from oblivion by the industry of that great archivist, Julio Firminio Judice Biker. The document was signed on behalf of a Bengali prince, the Raja of Bakla (Parmānanda Rāy) by Ni'amat Khan (Nematchão) and Gannu Bysuar (Kanu or Ganu Biswas ?), who seem to have made a journey to Goa to negotiate a subordinate alliance on the part of their master with the Portuguese Viceroy of India (Dom Constantino de Braganza).[1] This treaty of the 30th April 1559 provided for a mutual military and commercial alliance. The Raja was to throw open his port of Bakla or any other suitable port of his principality to the Portuguese trading fleet, treat the Portuguese tradesmen who might visit his country with kindness and consideration, provide the visiting fleet with a full cargo of the produces of the coast land stretching from Bakla to Paigao, and refrain from raising the custom duties of his ports. The Portuguese, in their turn, offered to discontinue their trading voyages to Chittagong, to pay the lawful duties levied at the Raja's port and to grant license to four of his trading boats for visiting Goa, Ormuz and Malacca every year. The alliance obviously placed the Raja in a subordinate position. While he was precluded from dealing with their enemies in any way, the Portuguese retained the right of concluding similar treaties with other ruling princes of this region. In lieu of the military co-operation, which the Portuguese promised him in his wars against his neighbours, Paramananda agreed to pay an annual tribute in a specified quantity of rice, butter, oil, tar, sugar and the finger produces of the loom. Obviously the Portuguese wanted to secure the monopoly

[1] Sen, *Studies in Indian History*, pp. 3-10.

of the trade of the country though the agency of the local Rajas, whose weakness and ambition readily lent them to the new plan.

The port of Bakla exists no more, and we do not know where Paigao was. It was not within the limits of Paramananda's domain, for the treaty refers to other princes of this coast, nor is it certain whether Paigão was situated on the Bay of Bengal. Bakla was a riverside port far from the sea. It may not be unreasonable to identify Paigão with Paigram in the modern district of Khulna. The place is near the Bhairab river which might have been flowing by it four centuries ago. If the Portuguese expected that Bakla, with their backing, would one day rob Chittagong of its importance as a centre of inland and overseas trade, they were sorely disappointed. But they had no reason to repent of the alliance of 1559, for in Paramananda and his successors they found unfailing friends in the darkest days of their adversity.

From Parmānanda let us turn to one of his successors. Forty years after the conclusion of the treaty a Christian missionary of the Society of Jesus, Melchoir da Fonseca, visited the court of Bakla on his way to Chandikan (Ciandecan). His account of his interview with the king is worth quoting: "I had scarcely arrived there, when the King (who is not more than eight years old, but whose discretion surpasses his age) sent for me and wished the Portuguese to come with me. On entering the hall where he was waiting for me, all the nobles and captains rose up, and I, a poor priest, was made by the King to sit down in a rich seat opposite to him. After compliments, he asked me where I was going, and I replied that I was going to the King of Ciandeca, who is 'the future father-in-law of your Highness,' but that as it had pleased the Lord that I should pass through his kingdom, it had appeared right to me to come and visit him and offer him the services of the fathers of the Company, trusting that his Highness would give permission to the erection of Churches and the making of Christians. The King said, 'I desire this myself, because I have heard so much of your good qualities' and so he gave me a letter of authority, and also assigned a maintenance sufficient for two of us."[1] The boy king of Bakla or Chandradwip has been rightly identified by Henry Beveridge with Raja Rāmchandra, son-in-law of the great Prātāpāditya of Jessore.[2] It is interesting to note here that his friendship for the Portuguese drew upon him the wrath of the King of Arakan who "suddenly

[1] Beveridge, *District of Bakarganj*, p. 31.
[2] Beveridge, *District of Bakarganj*, pp. 175-177.

threw himself upon that of Bacola, of which he possessed himself without difficulty, as the king of it was absent and still young."

Fonseca's mission supplies an apt illustration of the faith following the flag. But the missionaries were not alone in the field. Fonseca's prayer "for the erection of churches and the making of Christians" was so readily granted because the boy king of Bakla had in his service a captain, and other people of Portuguese extraction and Christian faith. Nor was he the only prince to enlist these foreign adventurers in his army. His father-in-law, for instance, and the powerful chief of Sripur welcomed these daring sailors and employed them to command their fighting fleet. Whether the Portuguese adventurers in the service of the Bhuiyans of Bengal tried, like their French and English successors of the eighteenth century, to further the political interests of their country while improving their own fortunes, we do not precisely know. But some of them certainly made the most of their opportunities and earned by their exploits a permanent place in the history of their times. Of these Domingo Carvalho was by far the ablest and did not miss any opportunity of serving his country's cause when one was available.

Carvalho was a native of Montargil in Portugal. We do not know when he came to India and in what capacity. He must have entered the service of Kedār Rāi, the famous chief of Sripur, sometime prior to 1602. He distinguished himself by the conquest of Sandwip which, if Du Jarric is to be credited, belonged of right to the Sripur Prince. The island was in those days an important centre of salt industry, and formed a battle-ground for the Mughals, the Maghs and the Portuguese. Situated off the coast of Chittagong its strategic advantages could not be overlooked either by the Mughal rulers of Bengal or the Magh Raja of Arakan. When Cæsar Frederick visited Sandwip in 1569 the island was inhabited by the Muslims and he found "the king a very good man of a Moore King."[1] How it was annexed by Kedār Rāi, and when it passed into Mughal hands remain yet to be ascertained. In 1602, Domingo Carvalho conquered Sandwip in his master's name, but unable to hold it against the natives of the place, he invited the co-operation of Manoel de Mattos, the Portuguese Captain of Dianga. The island was then completely reduced and divided between Carvalho and Mattos. The annexation of Sandwip was hailed as a great feat of Portuguese arms and the two heroes were

[1] *Purchas His Pilgrimes*, Vol. X, p. 137.

rewarded by the King of Portugal with the knighthood of the Order of Christ and the rank of the gentlemen of the royal household (*Fidalgos da Casa real*). Their triumph, however, proved short-lived. The King of Arakan, who had extended his dominion to Chittagong, led an expedition against Dianga and inflicted a defeat on Mattos. Carvalho hurried to the rescue of his colleague and captured the Arakanese fleet with all its arms and ammunition (Nov. 1602). The Magh King wreaked his vengeance on the Portuguese citizens living under his jurisdiction, and fitted up a second fleet to retrieve his honour. Carvalho did indeed achieve a second victory, but this pyrrhic success rendered his position in Sandwip utterly untenable. He abandoned the island and retired to Sripur with some of his followers, while the rest of the Portuguese and native Christians betook themselves to the friendly courts of Bakla and Chandikan. While at Sripur, Carvalho had to fight a Mughal fleet of hundred masts. With thirty armed *Jalia* boats Carvalho put the invading armada to flight and saved Sripur from Mughal subjugation. We next find him at Hughli where the Portuguese had a flourishing settlement. Obviously he wanted to enlist the support of his countrymen of that colony in another enterprise against Sandwip. While sailing up the Hughli river his fleet was, without any provocation, assailed from the batteries of a neighbouring Mughal fortress. Carvalho retaliated by storming the place and putting the garrison to the sword. This was the last battle that the famous veteran was destined to fight. Shortly afterwards he visited Chandikan (Dhumghat ?) where he was treacherously put to death by Pratapaditya, in order, it is said, to propitiate the King of Arakan, whose conquest of Sandwip and Bakla had brought him perilously near the territories of the Jessore prince.

Sandwip naturally recalls the exploits of a romantic ruffian whose name has been written large in letters of blood in the unhappy annals of that island. His courage, cruelty and cunning placed Sebastião Gonsalves Tibau (better known as Gonzales in Bengal) in a class by himself. Born in an obscure village near Lisbon of peasant stock, Gonzales came to India in 1605 and enlisted as a soldier. Before long he gave up the less remunerative profession of arms for the more lucrative trade in salt. He seems to have prospered in his new venture, and his profits soon enabled him to purchase a *Jalia* of his own. We find him and his boat at Dianga in 1607. He somehow survived the massacre of that year, and set up as a free-booter with a dozen of his more daring countrymen. The small islands of the deltaic region provided suitable bases of operation from where he carried on plundering raids against the

Arakan coast, not missing such defenceless merchantmen as came his way. The Government of Sandwip had in the meantime passed to Fath Khan, a Muslim captain formerly in Portuguese employ. Unwilling to brook any rival, he murdered the Portuguese and the Christian inhabitants of his island, and set out with a fleet of forty sails in search of Gonzales and his pirates. While busy dividing their spoils in the island of Dakhin Shahbazpur (in the District of Bakarganj) they were surprised by Fath Khan. Better seamanship however prevailed over greater number, and Fath Khan was defeated and slain. The victory gained for Gonzales the unquestioning obedience of his companions, and he was formally elected their leader. Success added to his ambition, and he next made himself the master of Sandwip (1609). In this enterprise, as in his earlier buccaneering exploits, he relied not a little on the support of the friendly Raja of Bakla. The spoils of his piracy used to be disposed of in the Raja's country, though the treaty of 1559 had positively provided against such a misuse of his ports. The Raja sent two hundred horsemen and some armed boats to help Gonzales in the conquest of Sandwip on condition that the revenue of the island would be equally shared by the two allies. Gonzales was not the man to honour his promise once his object was gained. He ruled Sandwip as an indepedent ruler and his fame soon attracted fresh adherents until his forces swelled to one thousand Portuguese, two thousand Indian soldiers, two hundred horsemen and eighty armed boats. The unfortunate Raja of Bakla was now to feel the might of his faithless friend, and was forcibly dispossessed of the islands of Dakhin Shahbazpur and Patelbhanga. Fortune continued to favour the bold bad man and the arrival in Sandwip of a princely fugitive of the Arakanese royal house, Anaporam, after an unsuccessful bid for power considerably added to the prestige of Gonzales. His intervention in favour of his new friend proved futile, and his troops had to beat a retreat before the superior forces of Arakan. The death of Anaporam paved the way for peace, and the progress of Mughal arms in the south-eastern districts of Bengal provided the motive for a close alliance between the rulers of Arakan and Sandwip. Fidelity however was not one of the failings of Gonzales, and the narrow straight course of rectitude was not to his taste. He not only betrayed the king of Arakan while engaged in fighting the Mughals, but seized his fleet and ruthlessly massacred his men. This treachery cost him only his nephew's life. The unfortunate youth had been sent to the Arakanese camp as a hostage for his uncle's good faith and the king avenged his wrongs by driving a stake through him.

But the good stars of Gonzales were already on the decline. His tyranny and oppression had alienated most of his adherents, but his ambition knew no satiety as yet. In 1615 Gonzales felt that he could add Arakan to his conquests, if his plan was supported by the Portuguese Viceroy of Goa. He immediately offered to return to the allegiance of the King of Portugal, and to pay him an annual tribute if his proposals were favourably accepted. The Viceroy Dom Jeronymo de Azevedo readily agreed and a fleet of sixteen sails under the command of Dom Francisco Menezes Roxo appeared in the Bay of Bengal (October 1615). Unfortunately for the Portuguese the King of Arakan was not so helpless as they had imagined, and Menezes Roxo unexpectedly found himself confronted with a Dutch squadron of superior number. The fight continued for two successive days in which the Portuguese Commodore lost his life. His successor in command Dom Luiz de Azevedo sailed to Sandwip while the battle was still undecided and inspite of all the importunities of Gonzales left him to his fate and returned to Goa. He was accompanied by many of Gonzales' followers who were glad to be rid of their hard-hearted master. Next year the King of Arakan conquered Sandwip and Gonzales faded out of history. His infamous career covered a brief period of ten years. Gonzales had the making of a great leader, but his training and environments made of him a pirate of the lower type. For unrelieved cruelty and treachery his record had hardly any parallel, but with better education under more favourable circumstances, he might have been a Raleigh or a Drake.

Here we may bid good-bye to the buccaneers of the Bay though Gonzales was by no means the last or the worst of them. The story of the Feringi pirates of Chittagong has been told in another chapter by another writer.

III

The loss of Sandwip did not mean the loss of Bengal. The Portuguese had many settlements of greater or lesser importance scattered all over the province. The prowess and professional skill of their seamen had won for them positions of trust and responsibility at the courts of the more prominent Chieftains (Bhuiyas), and small Portuguese colonies flourished under their patronage at Bakla (Bakarganj), Chandikan (Jessore), Sripur (Dacca), Bhulua (Noakhali) and Katrabo (Dacca and Mymensingh). Some of these settlements had been visited by Fonseca Fernandes and Sosa in the closing year of the sixteenth century. The King of Chandikan provided funds and a site, and the first Christian church in Bengal was

constructed in his principality.[1] The Jesuit fathers had full freedom to preach the Gospel wherever they went, and if their flock did not live a truly Christian life, it was no fault of the local rulers. The Portuguese, however, had not limited their commercial and martial enterprise to the semi-independent region under the government of the Bengali princes. They could not possibly ignore the principal trading centres of the country and had their factories at Dacca, Tamluk, Hijli and other convenient places. Two ports, however, demanded their attention most and absorbed the major part of their investments. Despite the abortive attempt of 1559 to rob it of its commercial eminence, Chittagong remained the leading place of Portuguese trade in Bengal. From the beginning to the end it was their Porto grande, the great port. Next in importance was Porto pequeno the little port in west Bengal. When Caeser Frederick visited Bengal in 1567 Satgaon was the little port of the Portuguese. As early as 1537-38 the Portuguese built their factory and custom house at Satgaon with the permission of the King of Bengal, and within thirty years, it attracted sufficient business to keep thirty to thirty-five merchant-men fully employed.[2] The Venetian merchant informs us-: " In the port of Satgan every yeere they lade thirtie or five and thirtie ships great and small, with Rice, Cloth of Bombast and of diverse sorts Lacca, great abundance of Sugar, Mirabolans dried and preserved, long Pepper, Oyle of Zerzeline, and many other sorts of merchandise." The prosperity of Satgaon, however, proved short-lived and when Ralph Fitch came to this country bareley three decades later (1583-91) "Hugeli" had become the "Porto Piqueno"[3] of the Portuguese, though he found Satgaon "a faire Citie for a Citie of the Moors, and very plentiful of things".

It is not difficult to guess why Hughli was preferred to Satgaon as an emporium of west Bengal trade. Satgaon owed its rise and fall not to the whims of man, but to the freaks of nature. The big river, that made it a convenient meeting place for the merchant fleets from far and near,[4] had gradually silted up, and trade dwindled as the stream diminished. Even in 1563 the Portuguese found it necessary to build temporary quarters at a village down stream during the trading season as their bigger boats were unable

[1] Purchas His Pilgrimes, Vol. X, p. 206.
[2] Purchas His Pilgrimes, Vol. X, pp. 113-14.
[3] Purchas His Pilgrimes, Vol. X, p. 182.
[4] According to Kavi Kankan Mukundarām it used to attract so much foreign trade that the merchants of Satgaon never left their home-town.

to reach Satgaon. Says Caesar Frederick: "A good Tides rowing before you come Satgan, you shall have a place which is called Buttor,[1] and from thence upwards the Ships doe not goe, because that upwards the River is very shallow, and little water. Every yeere at Buttor they make and unmake a village, with Houses and shops made of straw, and with all things necessarie to their uses, and this Village standeth as long as the Ships ride there, and till they depart for the Indies, and when they depart, everie man goeth to his plot of houses and there setteth fire on them, which thing made me to marvaile. For as I passed up to Satagan, I saw the Village standing with a great number of people, with an infinite numbers of Ships and Bazars, and at my return downe with my Captaine of the last Ship, for whom I tarried, I was all amazed to see such a place so soone razed and burnt, and nothing left but the signe of the burnt Houses." Making and unmaking of temporary villages do not lead to comfort or economy, and the Portuguese were naturally anxious to shift their "little port" to a convenient place on a navigable river with sufficient anchorage and Hughli replaced Satgaon as the principal Portuguese settlement in west Bengal.

The Portuguese settlement of Hughli is associated with the name of the greatest Mughal ruler of India. A serious student of comparative theology, Akbar wanted a competent interpreter of the Christian faith at his court and naturally turned to the Portuguese of Bengal about whose commercial enterprise he had heard so much. At his request a Portuguese missionary, Father Juliano Pereira, and a Portuguese man of affairs, Pedro Tavares (Partab Bar Feringi of the *Akbar-nama*) made their journey to the imperial court. Although we do not know whether Tavares preceded Pereira to Agra, it will not be unreasonable to assume that the worldly interests of the merchant were suitably reinforced by the spiritual influence of the Missionary, and a *farmān* was in due course obtained and the Portuguese removed their factory and custom house from Satgaon to Hughli about 1580. Tavares was in all probability the first governor of the new settlement. The new "Porto Pequeno" quickly rose in importance and became a flourishing business centre before long. The settlement expanded and the Portuguese merchants acquired landed property on both banks of the Ganges, if Father Sebastien Manrique is to be credited. The main articles of trade that Hughly provided were rice, sugar, silk and cotton goods. Rice in particular was exceptionally cheap in Bengal during the sixteenth century.

[1] Betor, near Calcutta, has been twice mentioned as a place of importance by Kavi Kankan Mukundarām in his *Chandi*.

Akbar doubtless expected that the Portuguese would devote their energy and resources entirely to the improvement of their commerce, and their armed fleet would prove a better instrument for policing the Bay than any his government had so far been able to provide. Jahangir shared his father's hopes and left the Portuguese in undisturbed enjoyment of their rights and privileges at Hughli. Shah Jahan however found it necessary to revise the policy of his father and grandfather. Within five years of his accession to the throne, Hughli was seized (1632) and a large number of prisoners were sent to Agra where they suffered great misery.

The Portuguese had their own explanation of the implacable hostility of the new emperor. This point has been fully discussed in Chapter XVII sec. IV in the account of Qāsim Khan's governorship.

A modern apologist argues that the Portuguese of Hughli were neither in league with the pirates of Chittagong nor guilty of piracy themselves.[1] But it cannot be gainsaid that the Portuguese of western Bengal shared the evil reputation of their confreres of the east for their lawless habits and predilection for piracy. A Bengali poet of note[2] pointedly referred to the dread with which a journey along the Feringi coast was commonly viewed when he said that the boat-men rowed ceaselessly night and day in fear of the *Harmād*[3] or the pirate-fleet. The Portuguese empire had expanded with phenomenal rapidity, and the mother-country had not the necessary surplus population for the development of the far-flung colonies. Convicts were, therefore, given the option of serving their terms at home or seeking their fortune in the east, and it is no wonder that some of the worst criminals found their way to Bengal. It is to be noted that contemporary European travellers had not a good word for the Portuguese, and Van Linschoten likened them to "wild men" and "untamed horses." If some of the bad characters of Portugal were annually drafted to India, the worst of them, according to Linschoten, left the more orderly and better governed settlements on the west coast for the ports of the Bay of Bengal which knew neither order nor discipline. Fernandes says that many of them "lived in Piracie and loose lusts."[4] It is, therefore, futile to argue that the Portuguese settlers of Hughli were orderly people with a healthy respect for law, who would scrupulously avoid any dubious method of making money. It is admitted by all that if Hughli was

[1] Campos, *History of the Portuguese in Bengal*, pp. 130-131.
[2] Kavi Kankan Mukundrām Chakravarti.
[3] Portuguese *armada*.
[4] *Purchas His Pilgrimes*, Vol. X, 205.

not a nest of pirates, it was a slave-market to which both Magh and Portuguese pirates had free access. It is there that they disposed of their unlucky prisoners. Slavery, it is true, was an institution recognised by Muslim and Hindu law, but it is the elementary duty of every State to provide for the security of life and property of each and every one of its members. Shah Jahan could not permit his subjects to be bought and sold like cattles in the slave-market of Hughli, simply because his officers had proved unequal to the task of defending their persons against the rovers of Chittagong and Arakan. The Portuguese of Hughli undoubtedly shared their guilt morally and legally when they trafficked with them in their offensive spoils. If Shah Jahan found it impossible to clear the Bay and the rivers of Bengal of these human sharks, the least he could do was to close the market where they brought their victims, and to eliminate their partners in this dismal business.

Into the military details of the capture of Hughli we need not enter. Suffice it to say that the Portuguese had no chance against the superior forces of Qāsim Khan, but they stood their ground with courage and resolution worthy of a better cause. The prisoners should have been more humanely treated, but the standards of the seventeenth century required that an example should be made of these unfortunate people because some of their compatriots had made slaves of Muslim women and children of noble birth. But it was not long before the Emperor relented. The Portuguese were permitted to return to their old settlement in 1633. They had felt the full weight of the Emperor's displeasure and might be reasonably expected to have a wholesome respect for his authority in future. No miracle was needed to convert Shah Jahan to a more merciful policy.

The fall of Hughli marked the beginning of the end. The pirates of Chittagong were exterminated in the next reign, but the Portuguese community still survives in Bengal. Even in the eighties of the eighteenth century (1786), they claimed special rights and privileges on the strength of the established custom and their contention was accepted by the Government of the day. The later rulers sometimes found their services useful, and Raja Rajballabh settled a small Portuguese colony at Padri Sibpur in the district of Bakarganj.[1] At Calcutta and Hughli, Dacca and Chittagong, the Luso-Indian citizens still form a link with the past, though they enjoy neither the prestige nor the prosperity of their adventurous forefathers.

[1] *Calendar of Persian Correspondence*, Vol, VII. pp. 199-201.
Beveridge, *District of Bakarganj*, p. 106.

IV.

Our review of the Portuguese relations with Bengal has been so far greatly to the discredit of that nation. Their courage was vitiated by cruelty, their inquisitiveness was marred by greed, and their progress in the province was ordinarily marked by disorder and lawlessness. But in fairness to the Portuguese we cannot leave the credit side out of account.

In spite of all their shortcomings the Portuguese did not suffer from the colour prejudice so common in the west, and freely intermarried with the natives of the country. Some of them permanently settled in this land and, if they failed to make any marked contribution to our civilisation and culture, they tried their best to improve the agricultural resources of the country of their adoption. Good peasants at home, they had a keen eye for the useful plants of other lands and a wonderful knack for acclimatizing exotic flowers and fruits in countries far from their original home. It is seldom realised that many of our common flowers and fruits were totally unknown before the Portuguese came. "The noxious weed that brings solace" to many and now forms a staple product of Rangpur was brought by the Portuguese as was that common article of food, potato—which is relished by princes and peasants alike. Tobacco and potato came from North America. From Brazil they brought cashewnut (*Anacardium Occidentale*), which goes by the name of *Hijli badam* because it thrives so well in the sandy soil of the Hijli littoral. The cultivation of this valuable nut is limited to a narrow strip of the sea coast, but the papaya (*Carica Papaya*) and the pineapple have taken more kindly to the soil of Bengal and few are aware that they are aliens of comparatively recent domicile. We are indebted to the Portuguese for *Kamranga* (*Averrhoe Carambola*) which finds so much favour with our children. To this list may also be added *Peyara* (*Psydium Guyava*), which found an appreciative poet in Monomohan Basu. The little *Krishnakali* (*Mirabilis Jalapa*) that cheers our countryside in its yellow, red, and white is another gift of the once dreaded Feringi. This does not exhaust the list of plants that the Portuguese introduced in Bengal, but, incomplete as this inventory is, it fairly illustrates their zeal for the art and science of Agri-horticulture.

No less important is the Portuguese contribution to our vocabulary. About fifty Portuguese words have found a permanent place in the spoken language of Bengal. Articles of common use often go by their Portuguese names (e. g. *Chabi, Balti, Perek, Saban. Toalia, Alpin* etc.), and such Portuguese words as *veranda* and

Janela have completely replaced their indigenous synonyms. It is no wonder that chairs and tables should have once been known as *kadera* (Port. *Cadeira*) and *mej* (Port. *Mesa*) for these furniture were originally introduced into Bengali homes by the Portuguese. They have not only enriched our orchards but added to the wealth and vigour of our mother-tongue.

When two races or nations intimately associate with each other, as the Portuguese and the Bengalees did, they naturally borrow from each other's vocabulary, and it is no wonder that so many Portuguese words found currency in our language. But the Portuguese did something more substantial for the development of our prose literature. For the first printed book in Bengali we are indebted to a Portuguese. It was a Portuguese who wrote the first Bengali prose work, and it was left to another Portuguese to compile the first Bengali grammar and dictionary, an achievement of no mean merit, an achievement of which any people might rightly feel proud. About 1599 Father Sosa translated into Bengali "a tractate of Christian Religion, in which were confuted the Gentile and Mahumetan errours: to which was added a short Catechisme by way of Dialogue, which the Children frequenting the Schools learned by heart."[1] Sosa's tractate has been unfortunately lost, but another dialogue written by a Bengali convert has been preserved for us. Dom Antonio do Rozario belonged to the landed aristocracy of east Bengal. In his early youth he was carried by the Magh pirates to Arakan where he was sold as a slave (1663). A Portuguese missionary, Manoel do Rozario ransomed him and later converted him to his own faith. It was under Portuguese inspiration that the new convert wrote a dialogue, the first Bengali work of its kind that has come down to us.[2] Dom Antonio's work might have shared the same fate as that of Sosa but for the devoted care of Manoel da Assumpcão and George da Apresentacã. Manoel had Antonio's manuscript transcribed in Roman script, and sent the transcript to Evora probably with a view to publication. He himself wrote a dialogue in Bengali and compiled a grammar and dictionary of the Bengali language for the benefit of his fellow workers in the province. Manoel da Assumpcão was for many years the head of the St. Tolentino mission of which Dom Antonio was the founder. *Crepar Xastrer Orth Bhed*, for such was the title of Manoel's dialogue, was printed by Francisco da Sylva at Lisbon in 1743. The same year witnessed

[1] *Purchas his Pilgrimes*, Vol. X, p. 205.
[2] Sen, *Brahman Roman Catholic Sambad*, introduction.

the publication of his grammar and vocabulary.[1] The Portuguese had therefore to their credit two dialogues, a grammar and dictionary long before any of our countrymen had attempted anything of this kind. Even in recent times the Luso-Indian community has produced teachers and scholars of Derozio and Percival's eminence.

If their literary and scientific achievements in other parts of India are taken into consideration, we cannot withhold our ungrudging tribute to the valuable pioneer work done by the Portuguese. The first printing press in India was set up by the Portuguese at Goa as early as 1556.[2] It was at Goa that the first scientific work on Indian medicinal plants by a European author (Garica da Orta) was published.[3] The Portuguese discovered the all-sea route to India, they explored the western and eastern coasts of this country, they demonstrated the superiority of the western methods of warfare, they experimented in empire-making by commercial penetration and subordinate alliance, they exploited the resources of the small indigenous States through Portuguese sailors and soldiers in Indian employment. In short, they anticipated the great pro-consuls of the East India Company in many respects, and they may fairly claim that where Portugal led other European countries followed, where she sowed others reaped, where she laid the foundation others built a magnificent superstructure.

1 Sen, *Brahman Catholic Sambad,* also Sen, *Early Career of Kanhoji Angria and other Papers,* pp. 125-128.

2 J. B. Primrose, *The first Press in India and its Printers* (The Library, December, 1939, pp. 241-265.)

3 The first edition of Garcia da Orta's *Coloquios Dos Simplese Drogas e Conseas Medicinais* was printed at Goa in April, 1563 by Joannes de Endem.

CHAPTER XX

BENGAL UNDER SHĀISTA KHAN AND IBRĀHIM KHAN

I. The Interregnum, April 1663—March 1664

The break-down in the internal administration of Bengal which followed Shujā's departure from the province in December 1657 to contest the throne, ended only six years later with Shāista Khan's entry into Rājmahal as subahdār on 8th March 1664. The remainder of Shujā's viceroyalty (two and a half years) was spent in Bihar, when all his attention and resources were concentrated on the struggle with Aurangzīb, so that the government of Bengal was starved of men and neglected. After Shujā's flight from Bengal, Mir Jumla passed a year and a half (May 1660-1 Nov. 1661) at Dacca in peace, but all his energies were absorbed by the necessary preparations for the conquest of Arakan and Assam. Then followed his seventeen months' absence on the Kuch and Ahom wars from which he returned a dead man (31 March 1663). Between this last date and Shāista Khan's arrival lay a period of exactly one year, when this province was ruled by subordinates without a supreme master on the spot, so that disorder and misrule reached their extreme.

When Mir Jumla set out for Kuch Bihar, he left Ihtishām Khan at Dacca in charge of the military defence of Bengal, without formally giving him the office and dignity of deputy subahdār; the revenue administration continued in the hands of Rāi Bhagwati Dās (not to be confounded with the eunuch Khwāja Bhagwān-dās). It took the officers at Dacca seven weeks to report Mir Jumla's death to the Emperor, who was then in far-off Lahore, *en route* to Kashmir, and receive his orders on the vacancy thus created. By these orders Ihtishām Khan was recalled to Court, and Dāud Khan (the subahdār of Bihār) was transferred to Bengal as acting subahdār, while Dilir Khan was nominated to govern Bengal pending the arrival of Dāud Khan. These orders reached Dacca on 17th May 1663, and Dilir Khan held charge of the province from that date up to 27th September, when Dāud Khan relieved him; and finally Dāud Khan was relieved on 8th March next year by Shāista Khan, who was to govern Bengal for nearly a quarter century.

The administration of this province in the period immediately after the death of Mir Jumla resembled the reign of mice in a

neglected barn. A disgraceful example of the political disorder in the province was supplied at the I'd-ul-fitr, less than a month after the last viceroy's death. On that day the gathering of the faithful in prayer and the ceremonious ending of the month of fast, were held and the Emperor's titles proclaimed from the pulpit, not in full congregation at the *I'd-gāh,* but at three different places in the same village of Khizrpur by the three highest officers, each in proud aloofness among his partisans, by Ihtishām Khan near his office, Dilir Khan (his rival in position, as the second-in-command of the army, immediately below Mir Jumla who was now no more) in his camp, and Munawwar Khan (the grandson of I'sā Khan of Bhāti, and the chief of the Bengal zamindārs' flotilla) near his residence. (*F. 'I.* Continuation, 106 *a*)

Shihābuddin Tālish, who had accompanied Mir Jumla in the Assam war, has left a graphic picture of the condition of Bengal as he saw it. First, all the experienced and able officers of the former regimes had either perished in the war of succession and the Assam expedition, or had left the province for the imperial Court. The highly talented Persian emigrés raised to high office by Shujā' were dismissed after Aurangzib's victory. A similar fate overtook many of Mir Jumla's protegés after his death, as they were Shias like himself.

Next, as Tālish recounts his painful experience: "The temporary rulers, in the absence of a substantive viceroy, made the most of their brief day of borrowed power by freely indulging in those wicked desires which they had so long kept in check in fear of Mir Jumla. Every one asked for every thing that he fancied, and these officials granted it with the utmost liberality like issuing an order on a river to supply water to a petitioner! This they considered a cheap way of gaining fame. Those men, including the author, who did not supplicate these upstart officials, got nothing. They restored zamindārs to their estates, of which they had been deprived (for treason or revenue default). Some zamindārs, who had clung to their old homes by promising to pay double their normal revenue, now got their old assessment restored. My friends wittily called this interregnum, 'the Festival of breaking the Ramzān fast'! In truth, a strange confusion overtook public affairs". (*Cont.*, 109.)

The game of the subordinate officials who thus found themselves freed from any overseer during this eclipse of the subahdārship, was to squeeze money from the people as quickly as possible. This they did in two ways; first by demanding revenue from all men who had been enjoying rent-free grants of land on

personal or religious grounds and most of whom had lost their title-deeds, though their names were borne on the exchequer rolls of the provincial diwān. The second device was a monopoly of trade in the necessaries of life and in some valuable articles of import. Mir Jumla himself had set the example in this evil practice. An official monopoly strangled the retail trade in articles of daily use like salt and betelnuts, while transit duties on the way and tolls at the places of sale inflicted a double burden on the consumers in the humblest market. The European traders who contributed so largely to the industry and wealth of the country, were harassed by petty local officers at every ferry or toll-post, while the governor himself attempted (but unsuccessfully) to make himself the sole agent for the supply of salt-petre to these foreign merchants. Some of his overzealous servants tried to rob the Europeans of their legitimate profit on the foreign articles which they imported, by buying them wholesale at a low price, as soon as their ships arrived, and then conducting the retail sale for the profit of their master at fancy prices.

II. Shāista Khan's rule, condition of the country

Shāista Khan was already 63 when he first came to Bengal, and his 22 years' residence in this climate completely sapped his health and vigour. In youth he had been remarkable for his military capacity and energy, especially in the Deccan campaign of Shah Jahan (1636). But in Bengal he was a tired old man, who left campaigning to his subordinates,—especially his many able sons,—while he himself spent his days in ease and pleasure amidst his numerous harem. In August, 1666 he had a severe attack of illness. The English merchant William Hedges, who visited him, reported him as "old and very feeble" (Dec. 1683), but that did not prevent him from having a son born to him on 12th November 1682, when he was in the 82nd year of his age. We get from this source a picture of Shāista Khan's life in Dacca in an almost royal style of luxury and splendour. He also sent from time to time very costly presents to his master the Emperor. (*A. N.* 109, 167. *Akh.*)

We possess details of Shāista Khan's remittances to Aurangzib. In 1680, the Emperor took a loan of seven lakhs from him. Next year, the nobleman loyally wrote the debt off, saying that he offered the whole amount as his peshkash. In February 1682, Shāista Khan promised to pay five lakhs annually as the tribute of Bengal as long as the Emperor was out on his Deccan expedition (*kharch-i-*

yisāq.) We know that this annual aid continued till 1685 and probably later. In June 1682, one lakh was sent to the Emperor as the Jaziya collected in Bengal. In July 1678, on return from his first viceroyalty of Bengal, he presented the Emperor with 30 lakhs in cash besides 4 lakhs worth of jewels.

Such extravagance could be maintained only by squeezing the people. His subordinates were left free to raise money for him by every means that they could think of; merchandise was stopped at every outpost and ferry and custom duty charged over and over again in disregard of official permits; cesses (*ābwābs*) abolished by imperial decree, still continued to be realised in practice. In addition the Nawab practised a monopoly of the sale of salt, betel-nut, and some other prime necessaries of life.[1] Thus, by grinding the masses, he amassed a vast treasure, besides building costly edifices at Dacca, the memory of which still lingers. Indeed, Bengal's only attraction for him was the ease of administering such a soft population and the gold to be had here for the picking.

The English merchant W. Clavell wrote from Hughli on 15th Dec. 1676.—"The Nawab Shāista Khan obtained Hughli as part of his jāgir . . . His officers oppress the people, monopolise most commodities, even as low as grass for beasts, canes (*i. e.*, bamboo), firewood, thatch etc. Nor do they want ways to oppress those people of all sorts who trade, whether natives or strangers, since whatever they do (at Hughli) when complained of to Dacca, is palliated under the name and colour of the Nawāb's interest . . . There is sent from Dacca 20 or 40 thousand rupees yearly to be employed (by the Nawāb's officers in Hughli) in merchandise, which is distributed among the Hindu merchants of the town, for which they agree to give 25 p. c. per annum . . . And yet the governor (i. e., faujdār) whenever he hath any goods on his hands calls for the Hindu merchants and distributes among them what quantity he pleases, at 10 or 15 p. c. higher than the market and they pay ready money . . . The governor doth get quantities of gold and other goods at under rates out of the Dutch warehouse . . . The goods (are) distributed among the town merchants at extraordinary rates as above mentioned." (Master's *Diary*, ii. 80-81).

Streynsham Master wrote to the English Company in London, about Shāista Khan as "a man who is everyday more covetous than other, so that to relate the many ways that are continually invented by his diwān . . . to bring money into his coffers would be endless".

[1] Salt and bees' wax were imperial monopolies in Bengal as early as 1676 (Master's *Diary*, i. 321.)

On 28 October, 1676 Master wrote that Shāista Khan in his less than 13 years' governorship of Bengal had "got so great a treasure together as the like is seldom heard of now-a-days in the world, being computed by knowing persons at 38 krores of rupees, and his income is daily two lakh rupees, of which his expenses is about one half". (*Ibid.*, i. 32, 55, 327n, 493.) *Maāsir-ul-Umarā*, ii. 705, speaks of the marvellous stories about his accumulated stores.

An Assamese traditional history states,—"Shāista Khan used to import by ship salt, betel-nuts and other articles and sell them in Bengal on profitable terms . . . He accumulated 17 krors of rupees. He also sold salt and *supāri* to the merchants in the city of Dacca. The latter were thus debarred from making purchases and sales on their own accounts." (Bhuyan, *Annals*, 167). Prince 'Azim-ud-din when governor of Bengal (1698-1707) carried on this private trade (*sauda-i-khās*), for which he received a sharp reprimand from his grand-father Aurangzib. (*Riyāz-us-S.* 243).

It is true that Shihābuddin Tālish asserts that Shāista Khan on his coming to Bengal in 1664 abolished the trade monopolies of his predecessors and the *ābwābs* forbidden by imperial orders. But the European testimony on Shāista Khan's covetousness and extortions is unassailable. I am inclined to ascribe Tālish's contrary assertion not to his Abul Fazalian habit of lauding his patron up to the skies, but rather to the fact that Tālish's *Continuation* stops abruptly in the third year of Shāista Khan's viceroyalty and that our author did not live to complete his book or even revise it. It would be reasonable to suppose that Shāista Khan did at first issue orders abolishing the monopolies, but that after a few years his subordinates took advantage of his supine rule to feed his prodigal luxury by raising money in the old wicked ways, and he asked no questions.

But though Shāista Khan himself lived at the provincial capital in royal magnificence and ease he was no *viceroi fainéant;* he succeeded in enforcing peace and administrative control, because he was assisted by four exceptionally gifted sons,—Buzurg Ummed Khan the conqueror of Chātgāon (1666) who left Bengal in 1682 to be the subahdār of Bihar; Zafar Khan who succeeded as thānahdār of Chātgāon; Abu Nasar the deputy subahdār of Orissa, and Irādat Khan who conquered Kuch Bihār (1685) and held the faujdāri of Kuch Bihar and Rāngāmāti.[1] One family ruled all divisions of Bengal, and ruled them worthily.

[1] Three other sons are mentioned in *Maāsir-i-'Ālamgiri*,—Itiqād Kh. (p. 351, 369), Khudā Banda Kh. (374, 351), and Abdul Mu'ala (369.)

III. KUCH BIHAR AND OTHER FRONTIER STATES

When on 4th January 1662 Mir Jumla set out from the captured capital of Kuch Bihār on the invasion of Assam, he left behind him Isfandiyār Beg as the acting faujdār of the country pending the arrival of 'Askar Khan, the substantive faujdār. But the Mughal officers by trying to enforce the revenue collection system of Upper India, which was utterly strange and unsuitable to the primitive population of Kuch Bihar, drove the country into rebellion. There was also the plunder of the rich by the greedy new officials, as soon as Mir Jumla's watchful eyes were removed from them. The result was that Raja Prān Nārāyan came down from his hill refuge, the people gathered round him, killed Muhammad Sālih the thānahdār of Kānthālbāri who was barring their path, and forced Isfandiyār Beg to evacuate the capital by cutting off his supplies. The detachment under 'Askar Khan fell back to the Ghorāghāt district beyond the southern frontier of Kuch Bihār, while Isfandiyār's troops were absorbed at Baritalā into Mir Jumla's retreating army (26 Feb. 1663). Mir Jumla's death followed soon after and nothing could be done to reconquer Kuch Bihar for a year afterwards. (*Con.* 110*b*.) All that 'Askar Khan did during the winter of 1663-64 was to occupy the *chakla* of Fathpur, outside the embankment of Kuch Bihar but belonging to that kingdom, and wait for the arrival of a new viceroy.

After Shāista Khan's arrival at Rājmahal (March 1664), the Kuch Raja heard of the new viceroy's design of attacking Kuch Bihar on his way to Dacca and immediately sent to him letters of submission and apology, promising a tribute of 5½ lakhs of rupees as the price of his pardon. The amount was paid by instalments, and 'Askar Khan's force was recalled from the Kuch Bihar frontier. (*Cont.* 121 b. *Akh.* yr. 8.)

We may here conclude the history of Mughal relations with Kuch Bihār till the close of the Nawābi. Rāja Prān Nārāyan, who had opposed Mir Jumla, died in 1666, and thereafter for nearly half a century this little kingdom was convulsed by civil wars, royal tyranny, and internal disorder. From a despatch written by Shāista Khan and received by Aurangzib on 19th April 1685, we learn—"Modh Nārāyan, the zamindār of Kuch Bihar had promised ten lakhs of rupess as his tribute. But taking advantage of the rainy season, when military operations in that country are impossible, he defaulted in payment. When the monsoon ended, I sent my son Irādat Khan (the thānahdār of Rāngāmāti) with 5000 horse and 7,000 foot, to expel him. Modh Nārāyan opposed him from

fort Ekduar, but was defeated and driven to Kuch Bihar fort, which was next attacked and taken by storm. The Raja fled away to fort Āhshām, situated on a hill, which will be next attacked by my son. This kingdom yields a revenue of 12 lakhs of rupees". (*Akh*, yr. 28.)

Kuch Bihar was now placed in charge of an imperial faujdār and continued in occupation till the end of Aurangzib's reign, the Raja holding only the jungly and inaccessible parts. The Mughals extended their sway over the southern and eastern portions of the kingdom, annexing much of the present districts of Rangpur and western Kamrup. "Irādāt Khan occupied the central *chaklas* of Fathpur, Qāzirhāt, and Kākinā. The Raja's officers in charge of these places as well as Tepā, Mānthonā Jhori and other parganas consented to pay tribute to the subahdār of Bengal. Pāngā and Baikunthpur transferred their allegiance to the same authority. In 1711 the *chaklas* of Bodā Pātgrām and Purbabhāg were ceded to the Muslims". All these cessions were confirmed by the Raja in a treaty in 1711. (H. N, Chaudhuri's *Cooch Behar State*, 238-241).

We shall now survey Shāista Khan's relations with other chiefs. (1) Bahādur Masnad-i-'Ala, the ruler of Hijli, had been imprisoned by Shujā', had escaped during the war of succession, had been captured again and confined in Rantambhor fort. He offered Shāista Khan one lakh of rupess for restoration to liberty and his estate (Sep. 1667). (2) The Raja of Jaintiā had raided Sylhet town in Mir Jumla's time, but in 1664 on hearing of Shāista Khan's arrival, he sent him a letter of submission and the best elephant in his possession through the faujdār of Sylhet, (*Cont.* 117a). But in November 1682, the Raja renewed his raids and burnt the environs of Sylhet town. Shāista Khan sent his son Irādat Khan to punish him. (3) In October 1682, the Raja of Tipperā led a predatory expedition up to the city of Sylhet. But he was soon afterwards chastised and made amends by presenting three elephants to the Emperor. (4) Early in 1676, Shāista Khan sent an expedition into the hill State of Morang (west of Kuch Bihar and north of Purnea), which made peace by paying tribute (mostly in goods) (*M.A.* 150.) We need not notice here the tumult caused in certain parts of Bengal and Bihar by a counterfeit Shujā' and a bogus Zain-ul-'ābidin (Shujā's son).

IV. Conquest of Chātgāon, 1666

The most memorable work of Shāista Khan in Bengal was the conquest of Chātgāon and the breaking of that pirates' nest, which had long terrorised the water-ways of the Bengal delta.

A Burmese king of Arakan had wrested the Chātgāon district from the independent sultans of Bengal in 1459. In Jahāngir's reign the Mughals had recovered the country up to the Feni river, which henceforth formed the south-eastern boundary of Bengal; but the tract near the mouths of the Ganges and the Brahmaputra knew no peace, on account of the weakness of the Mughal Government at sea, the settlement of Portuguese adventurers in Arakan, and their practice of piracy under shelter of the Arakan ruler. In 1617 the Arakanese conquered the island of Sondip from a Portuguese usurper, and thus secured a halfway house for their raids into Dacca and Bāqarganj.

The Burmese people are noted for their skill in navigation and river fighting. And now being allied to Portuguese daring and superior firearms, they became irresistible in our eastern waters. The imperial Government could do nothing to oppose them. One subahdār of Bengal, Khānazād Khan (1626) retired to Rājmahal in fear of the pirates, abandoning the defence of Dacca to his subordinates. "As these raids continued for a long time, Bengal became day by day more desolated. Not a house was left inhabited on either side of the rivers lying on the pirates' track from Chātgāon to Dācca. The prosperous district of Baklā (Bāqarganj) was swept clean with the broom of plunder and kidnapping, so that none was left to occupy any house or kindle a light in that region". (*Cont.* 123*b*). Latterly the Raja of Arakan ceased to send his own fleet on these expeditions, and left the work to the Feringis who shared their booty with him.

The pirates had a choice of two routes: "When they came from Chātgāon to ravage Bengal they skirted the imperial frontier post of Bhuluā on their right and the island of Sondip on their left, and reached the village of Sangrām-garh at the southern apex of the Delta of Dacca (some 30 miles from Dacca) and the then point of junction of the Brahmaputra and the Ganges. From this place they sailed up the Ganges, if they wished to plunder Jessore, Hughli and Bhushnā, or up the Brahmaputra if Vikrampur, Sonārgāon and Dācca were their objectives". (*Cont.* 139.)

The deep channel parting from a bend of the Ganges some distance east of Tāmluk and running eastwards to Dacca and Chātgāon was called by the English merchants in that age as the *Rogues' River,* because "the Arakanese used to come out thence to rob and sailed up the river Ganges". (S. Master's *Diary,* i. 321, map in i. 507.)

"The Arakan pirates, both Magh and Feringi, used constantly to plunder Bengal. They carried off the Hindus and Muslims they

could seize, pierced the palms of their hands, passed thin strips of cane through the holes, and threw the men huddled together under the decks of their ships. Every morning they flung down some uncooked rice to the captives from above, as people fling grain to fowl . . . They sold their captives to the Dutch, English and French merchants at the ports of the Deccan. Sometimes they brought their captives to Tāmluk and Bālesore for sale at high prices . . . Only the Feringis sold their prisoners, but the Maghs employed all whom they could carry off in agriculture and other occupations, or as domestic servants and concubines". (*Con.* 122b.—123.)

It was Shāista Khan's task to put an end to this terror. At first the prospect appeared hopeless, because the Arakanese were flushed with a long and unbroken course of victories; and "their cannon were beyond counting and their war-vessels more numerous than the waves of the sea", while the Bengal troops and sailors were utterly terrified and the Bengal flotilla (*nawwāra*) had been wofully depleted by Shujā's negligent administration and the losses of the Assam war of Mir Jumla. But Shāista Khan's energy and persistence overcame every obstacle. A new navy was created, manned and equipped in a little over a year. In the great dockyards that lined the channel passing through the city of Dacca in the quarter known as Tānti Bāzār, boats were built in large numbers, and additional vessels were also procured at the minor ports of Hughli, Jessore, Chilmāri, Karibāri and Bālesore. Crews were assembled, provisions and munitions collected, and expert officers chosen for the higher posts. In a short time 300 vessels were got together, ready in war-trim.

The first step in the campaign was the conquest of the island of Sondip—only six hours' sail from Chātgāon. Dilāwwar, a run-away captain of the Mughal navy, who had established himself as king here, was defeated and captured by an expedition from Dacca under admiral Ibn Husain (November 1665.) A still more important gain was the seduction of the Feringis of Chātgāon from the side of the Arakanese. Luckily for Shāista Khan, a feud had just then broken out between the Magh ruler of Chātgāon and the local Portuguese. The entire Feringi colony of the place escaped from it with their families and property in 42 *jaliā* boats (December 1665) to the Mughal commandant at Noākhāli. Shāista Khan gave their chief captain a bounty of Rs 2,000 and a monthly pay of Rs 500, and their other leaders were all enlisted in the Mughal service.

In fact, the coming over of the Feringis was really the key to the conquest of Chātgāon. Their chief captain urged an immediate

attack on Chātgāon, before the Arakanese could recover from the shock of the desertion of their Feringi defenders and get time to bring up reinforcements from Arakan. So, on 24th December 1665, the expeditionary force, 6500 strong, started from Dacca, under the command of Buzurg Ummed Khan, the eldest son of the viceroy. The imperial fleet numbered 288 vessels of all kinds (out of which 21 were large gun-boats or *ghurābs* and 157 fast-rowing long and slender *kosās*.) The Feringis with about 40 vessels of their own acted as auxiliaries and bore the real brunt of the fight at sea. The plan of the campaign was that the fleet under Ibn Husain should creep along the coast, while the army should march parallel to it, each supporting the other. Noākhāli was the starting point. Crossing the Feni river at Jagdiā, on 14th January 1666, the army entered Arakanese territory. Farhād Khan leading the vanguard, advanced cutting the jungle along the shore and making a way. The fleet entered the Kumiriā creek, only two marches short of Chātgāon, and landed a body of pioneers, who began to cut the jungle forward in the direction of Chātgāon and behind towards the advancing land forces. These last joined hands on the 21st, and the vanguard moved slowly onward through the dense pathless forest.

The first naval battle was fought on 23rd January, when admiral Ibn Husain sailed out of the Kumiriā creek and attacked the light squadron of the Maghs in the open sea near the mouth of the Kāthāliā channel. The Feringis led the Mughal van and their onset decided the day; the Maghs jumped overboard from their heavy gun-boats (*ghurābs*), which the imperialists captured, while their light *jalias* fled away. The advancing Mughals were stopped by the main Magh fleet, consisting of large ships called *khālus* and *dhums*, which had come out of the Huriā creek. After watching the enemy for the night, the imperialists, next morning (24th January) advanced to the attack, "firing their guns and placing their biggest ships in the front line and their smaller and faster boats in the rear. The Magh fleet, heavily outnumbered, again took to flight, and retreated into the Karnafuli river (about 3 P. M.), where they drew up their ships in line between the town of Chātgāon and an island in midstream. The opposite (or southern) bank of the river was defended by three bamboo stockades filled with musketeers and artillery, who opened fire on the Mughal fleet. Ibn Husain landed a party which took and burnt the stockades after a stiff fight, while his ships sailed up the river and dashed themselves upon the Magh fleet. A great battle was fought, in which the Feringis and the Bengal zamīndār Munawwar Khan distinguished themselves. Several of the Arakanese ships were sunk by gun-fire

or ramming, and the remainder (135 vessels) were captured. The victors rested in their ships that night a little below the town. Next day (25th January) the fort of Chātgāon was besieged and bombarded. The garrison, rendered helpless by the annihilation of their navy, resisted bravely for one day. Early in the next morning (26th) they capitulated to Ibn Husain. But the disorderly followers of Munawwar Khan, who had entered the fort in search of plunder, recklessly set fire to the houses and burnt down much of the town and its property. Next morning, the commander-in-chief Buzurg Ummed Khan, who had hastened by the land-route with the army, made a triumphal entry into the fort. The prize taken was of little money value. It consisted of three elephants, 1026 pieces of brass and iron cannon (mostly small pieces carrying one lb or even smaller shot), many match-locks and camel-swivels, and much ammunition, besides two thousand Maghs taken captive and sold as slaves. But the most glorious fruit of the campaign was the release and restoration to home of many thousand Bengali peasants who had been kidnapped before by the pirates and held here in serfdom.

Chātgāon became the seat of a Mughal faujdār and its name was changed to Islāmābād by order of the pious Emperor.

V. Interval: Prince Muhammad 'Āzam as subahdār of Bengal

The one year's Bengal viceroyalty of Prince Muhammad 'Āzam Shāh (who came to Dacca on 29th July 1678 and left it finally on 12th October 1679), reads more like a tale of the "Arabian Night" than a page of sober history. This prince, the best-loved son of Aurangzib, was inordinately vain, passionate, and thoughtless. His undoubted power of command and personal courage were neutralised by his recklessness and incapacity for planning. The popular story of the day was that he begged for the subahdāri of Bengal, because he was a king's son, and another king's son, his paternal uncle Shujā', had governed that province before! The only incident recorded during his subahdāri was the securing of Gauhāti fort by bribing its Ahom custodian (February 1679); but this much-lauded "conquest" continued in Mughal hands for three years only, having been recovered by the Ahom king without a blow from the dying faujdār Ibn Husain in mid August 1682 (*Akhbarat*[1]).

No vassal chief durst raise his head, no commoner durst

[1] S. Mahant's *Buranji*, 279. describes some skirmishes.

complain to the Emperor, and no official news-reporter had the imprudence to write anything against the maladministration of the Pādishāh's son. His lordly contempt for all other men is well illustrated in the stories of his doings at Dacca that reached Assam and were recorded there shortly afterwards. The *Pādshāh Buranji* in the Assamese language, tells us, "Sultan 'Āzam destroyed the quarters of Shāista Khan and erected his own residence on the same site . . . There were emporiums of salt worth Rs 152,000 at several places on the bank of the Bangsāh river (? Buriganga) which Shāista Khan could not transport (away.) . . . The *kotwāl* proposed to the Emperor's son about this salt, 'I want to deposit the salt in the royal store-house. The place will be cleared as the salt depots occupy a large area of land'. To this 'Āzam replied, 'Shāista Khan is a subject of ours. It will look odd if we appropriate his goods. To transact business with his commodity by sale or distribution befits a mean person. So, you should destroy the depots and pour the salt into the river'. The *kotwāl* did so." (Two other cases of unjust exaction by him are given here.)

The Assamese chronicle continues, "The Pādishāhzāda appointed Mir Maulā his diwān and handed over his duties to the diwān and Malukchānd the *huzur-navis*, and passed his days in hunting on horseback . . . Thus did 'Āzam rule in Bengal. He neglected the duties entrusted to him by the Emperor; he simply roamed about hunting on horse-back". (S. K. Bhuyan, *Annals of the Delhi Pādshāhate*, 169-172).

The prince's servants took advantage of such a supine master and acted as they liked. The English merchants at Hughli wrote (on 16 Aug. 1679),—"We heartily wish that your news of our Prince's going to (the) Deccan came out true, his officers in these parts abusing all without control, the Prince himself being wholly addicted to his pleasures, without minding anything, his coffers in the interim filling apace, he having picked up in this last year's time, as is said, upwards of a million of pound sterling" (=over 80 lakhs of rupees). The terror and disorder created by his officers is best illustrated by the following letter of the Dacca factors, written on 13th October 1679:—"Prince 'Āzam Shāh left the city on the 6th, and on the 12th began his journey towards Rājmahal; 'twas feared there would have been a general plunder about the time of the Prince's departure, but it proved not so; that Shāista Khan was made subah of Bengal, his son Buzurg Ummed Khan being sent his *offtalle* (?) or deputy to take possession of the Government, and is on his way making great speed to Dacca". (Master's *Diary*, ii. 243*n*, 268).

VI. Shāista Khan's second Governorship, 1679—1688; war with the English

Shāista Khan's second term as subahdār of Bengal (Oct. 1679—June 1688) was disturbed by a friction with the English traders which ended in their making war on the Mughal Empire. The causes of discord between the two sides had been multiplying for a long time past.

The English East India Company had established their first factory in Bengal at Hugli in 1651. For some years before it they had been making their purchases and sales in Bengal from their Agency or Head Factory at Balesore in Orissa (founded in 1642), through subordinates who used to visit a few centres in Bihar and Bengal periodically every year. At first their transactions in Bengal were on a very limited scale and unprofitable. Before 1651, their annual investment in this province was less than one-tenth of the value of the Dutch Company's. The Civil War in England (1642-1648) and the war between Holland and England under the Protectorate (1652-'54), ruined the business of the old E. I. Co., and the London Directors of the latter Company at one time issued orders for abandoning the trade in Bengal and "the Bay" altogether. But after 1660, when Aurangzib's final triumph over his rivals restored peace in India and the Restoration of Charles II settled affairs in Great Britain, the English trade with Bengal began to improve rapidly. By 1680 the Company's exports from Bengal had risen to £ 150,000 in value, and next year to £ 230,000.

But in August 1682, when William Hedges arrived at Hugli as the first governor and Agent of the English Company in Bengal (which was now removed from the control of Madras), he found the trade almost brought to a standstill by the lawlessness and greed of the Mughal officials. "The several affronts, insolences, and abuses daily put upon us by Bālchānd (the customs-collector at Hugli and Shāista Khan's favoured instrument of extoration), being grown insufferable, the Agent and Council made use of diverse expedients for redress of their grievances; but all means proving ineffectual, it was agreed that the only expedient now left was for the Agent to go himself in person to the Nawāb and Diwān at Dacca . . . to make some settled adjustment concerning the customs". Hedges spent six weeks in Dacca, and his *Diary*, which has been edited by Sir H. Yule (1888), gives a graphic account of the life and court of Shāista Khan and the condition of the country and the people as observed by him. But nothing resulted from this mission; Shāista merely promised that he would request the

Emperor to give the English a *farmān*, and the local officials at Hugli continued to stop the Company's boats and seize their goods.

At last the English traders lost all patience with the corrupt and lawless Mughal Government. ', Hedges and others urged upon the (Directors of the) Company that trade in Bengal would never prosper till they came to a quarrel with the native authorities, got rid of the growing exactions, and were established in a defensive settlement with ready access to the sea". This resolve was to bear fruit in the foundation and fortification of Calcutta before the 17th century was over.

The Court of Directors obtained from King James II permission to retaliate their injuries by hostilities against Shāista Khan and Aurangzib, and in 1686 ships with troops were sent to India from England for making a vigorous attack upon both sides of the Indian peninsula. Only three of these ships reached Bengal. The English troops arrived by driblets towards the end of 1686, and were quartered in Hugli and near it. These preparations for war could not be concealed from Shāista Khan; he concentrated 3,000 foot and 300 horse at Hugli to guard the town (Wilson, i. 90-96).

When feelings were thus strained on both sides, it was easy for a small incident to precipitate war. On 28th October 1686, three English soldiers of the Hugli factory, when visiting the bāzār of the town for making purchases, were attacked and wounded. The English captain made a sally to rescue them, but his advance was stopped and the huts surrounding the factory were burnt down by the Mughal faujdār 'Abdul Ghani, who also opened fire with his artillery on the English ships. But reinforcements arrived soon after, and the English stormed the Mughal battery and advancing into the town burnt down much of it. Their ships continued the work, by bombarding the town and sending landing parties to sack it. Early in the day the faujdār fled away in disguise. The English lost two men killed and several wounded, and their old factory and its godown were burnt. But on the Mughal side about 60 men were killed and a great number wounded, while four to five hundred houses and a great number of boats were burnt down. (*Ibid*, i. 97).

The Hugli faujdār sought the meditation of the Dutch merchants of Chinsurā and opened negotiations with the English, but it was a trick for gaining time to call up reinforcements. The English used the respite to pack their stores and prepare for evacuating Hugli. Shāista Khan on hearing of the sack of Hugli sent vast detachments of cavalry there and ordered the English to be seized. On 20th December the English left Hugli with all their property, and sailing down the river for 24 miles, halted at the hamlet of Sutānāti

(the centre of the coast-line of modern Calcutta), from which place their Agent, Job Charnock continued the negotiations with Shāista Khan, who merely temporised. In February 1687 the subahdār threw off the mask and threatened the English with expulsion. On 9th February Charnock left Sutānuti and captured the imperial forts at Thānā (modern Garden Reach, facing Mātiā Burj), a few miles west of Calcutta and down the Ganges, and seized the island of Hijli, on the east coast of the Medinipur district (Contāi subdivision), where the English established themselves after landing their men and guns. Next month (March) a detachment of 170 English soldiers and sailors landed at Balesore, took the Mughal fort and burnt down the two towns, called Old and New Balesore.

About the middle of May 1687, 'Abdus Samad, a lieutenant of Shāista Khan arrived before Hijli with 12,000 men, to expel the English. From the mainland in the west his heavy batteries fired across the Rasulpur river on the English position in the island and drove their ships from their anchorage. On 28th May, a body of 700 Mughal cavalry and 200 gunners crossed the river above Hijli, seized that town and set it on fire. But the deadly malaria of the climate did 'Abdus Samad's work. Of the small English army, two hundred had died of disease, and only a hundred men, weakened by fever, survived, while only five were left alive out of their forty officers. Their provisions also ran out. But they tenaciously held on and continued the fight. At last 'Abdus Samad sued for peace. On 11th June, the English evacuated Hijli, carrying away all their artillery and munitions.

On 16th August, 1687 Shāista Khan issued a letter permitting the English to build a fort at Uluberiā (20 miles south of Calcutta) and renew their trade at Hughli. So, Charnock with his ships returned, but halted at Sutānuti (September). But a new difficulty arose on account of the English war on the Mughal shipping on the Bombay coast (by Sir J. Child) and Shāista Khan finally withdrew his concessions. A year was wasted in this way, and on 8th November 1688 the English evacuated Calcutta a second time, abandoning all their stations and business in Bengal.

Their new Agent, the naval Captain Heath (who had superseded Job Charnock), now sailed to Balesore, stormed the Mughal fort (29th November), and seized New Balesore town, committing unspeakable atrocities on the inhabitants, Christians and non-Christians, men and women alike. On 23rd December, he sailed away to Chātgāon, wishing to seize that town and make it an independent fortified base of the English in the Bay of Bengal. But at last

giving up this idea, he sailed away for Madras (17th February 1689), abandoning all his Bengal projects.

By this time Shāista Khan had left Bengal (June 1688), and Aurangzib, too, had issued orders for conciliating the English and restoring their trade in his dominions, which made a fair addition to his customs revenue. The next governor of Bengal wrote to the supreme Agency at Madras to send a discreet envoy to Dacca for making a settlement with him. This letter was received on 3rd January 1689. On 2nd July Ibrāhim Khan, immediately after coming to Bengal as viceroy (in the place of Khan-i-Jahān Kokah, dismissed after eleven months' tenure), wrote to the Madras Council inviting the English to return to Bengal and promising them fair treatment, and this letter was received on 7th October.

At last in February 1690, peace was finally concluded between the Mughal Government and the English on the West Coast, and on 23rd April the Emperor wrote to Ibrāhim Khan to let the English trade freely in Bengal as before. (Stewart's *Bengal*, app. vii and vi.) So, the Madras Council decided to send Job Charnock back to Bengal as Agent. He arrived at Sutānuti on 24th August 1690. This was the foundation of Calcutta. In the same year the French made a humble but independent settlement of their own at Chandernagore, in a purchased village.[1]

VII. Shāista Khan's fame in Bengal

Captain Charles Stewart, the first modern historian of Bengal, wrote in 1813.—" By the Muhammadan historians[2] Shāista Khan is described as the pattern of excellence; but by the English he is

[1] Foundation of Chandernagore,—F. Martin's *Mémoire*, iii. 93, 117, 149, 294. Kaeppelin, 321.

Job Charnock's death and family,—Martin's *Mémoire*, iii. 296. Yule, *Hedges' Diary*, vol. 2, lxxxviii, xc. also vol 1. 52 (Indian wives.)

[2] Stewart's sole authority here is the *Riyāz-us-Salātin* (written in 1788) which adds, "Shāista Khan governed Bengal with generosity, justice and care for the welfare of the peasantry. He granted villages and plots of land, free of revenue, to the widows of respectable men, to persons of good birth and the indigent. When complaint was made to Aurangzib about this prodigality, Shāista Khan went to the Court and explained satisfactorily that these grants did not reduce the State revenue in any way"—(evidently he had given away waste land that had yielded no revenue before), pp 222-223. The Biblio. Indica Persian text is hopelessly corrupt here; I have given the sense of it. But in reality, Shāista Khan's profusion of expenditure did upset the Bengal budget. At the end of his first term in 1678 the provincial diwān reported to the Emperor that this subahdār had drawn and spent one kror and thirty-two lakhs of rupees in excess of his *tankhā* grant. Again, during his second term (1683), it was reported that he had overspent 52 lakhs. (*Maāsir-i-'Alamgiri*, 170 and 234.)

vilified as the oppressor of the human race . . . During the Government of Shāista Khan the commerce of the English, notwithstanding his harsh conduct to Europeans, continued to flourish : . . . His memory is to this day spoken of with the highest respect in that province. It is related that during his government, grain was so cheap that rice was sold at the rate of 640 lbs (i. e., eight maunds) weight to the rupee : to commemorate which event, as he was leaving Dacca, he ordered the western gate through which he departed, to be built up, and an inscription to be placed thereon interdicting any future governor from opening it, till he had reduced the price of grain to the same rate : in consequence of which injunction, the gate remained closed till the government of Nawāb Sarfarāz Khan. Several of the public buildings erected by Shāista Khan are still to be seen at Dacca." (*Hist. of Bengal,* Sec. vi).

As for the cheapness of grain during his viceroyalty it need not excite any surprise. About 1632, Father Sebastien Manrique during his travels in Bengal, found rice selling at five maunds to the rupee (Luard's *Manrique,* i. 54.), and Dacca being in the centre of the "rice bowl" of Bengal, grain was naturally still cheaper there than in central Bengal.

In fact, Shāista Khan's fame in Bengal was due to the easy Oriental way of gaining popularity with the vulgar,—by living in a regal style of pomp and prodigality, supporting a vast parasite class of useless servants and hangers on, and practising indiscriminate charity to an army of pretended saints and theologians, loafers calling themselves religious mendicants, and decayed scions of good families who had learnt no trade or honest means of livelihood. This is exactly the picture that we get of his policy when we rightly interprete Shihābuddin Tālish's uncontrolled eulogy of Shāista Khan's truly noble and generous soul. (*Con.* 117*a*-121*b*).

VIII. The Mughal Buildings of Dacca

It would be convenient to notice here the old Mughal buildings of Dacca and its environs, many of which are associated with Shāista Khan. Twenty years after his final departure from Dacca, the political capital was removed to Murshidābād, and then desolation and ruin fell upon the once proud city named after Jahāngir. The pitiless forces of Nature hastened the process. In a land where no building stone is visible within 400 miles and no hard wood grows on the soil, all structures had to be built of brick with lime mortar. In an age when cement was unknown, and in a climate where 92 inches of rain fall every year (mostly concentrated in three months) and the

summer heat is excessive, and the frequent earthquakes of the Assam hills often extend to it, the life of these structures was short. As Sir Charles D'Oyly has observed,—" In the climate of Dacca, alternately humid with excessive rains and the floods of the Ganges, and glowing with the fervors of an Indian sun, vegetation is rapid and abundant. If a bird drop a seed, or the wind waft one where it may find permanent lodgement among the chinks of a building, it presently puts forth fibres which soon become roots and branches, clinging among the stucco and fissures, and finding nourishment, as it were, in the midst of sterility. The mosque of Saif Khan has thus been o'er-canopied with the foliage of the banian, which will one day perhaps bury it in the depth of forest gloom . . . It was originally surmounted by three domes; but during the rainy season of the year 1811, the damps and storms co-operating with the superincumbent weight of foliage, drove in the roof".

Besides mosques, no brick house was constructed for residence. The usual type of brick building was the *Katra,* or square enclosed by boundary walls on the four sides and entirely open in the middle. Cloisters ran along these walls, under roofs of brick or lean-to thatched covers. There was no separate brick building in the centre for the viceroy or the grandees. They ran up bamboo and grass houses, i. e., *bungalows,* some of which were very elegant and costly, especially in the decoration of their walls and windows. In these the great men and their families lived in summer and the monsoons, while they spent the dry season (winter and spring) in tents pitched in the middle of the *Katra*[1]. The bungalows had to be repaired every year before the monsoon started, and none of them lasted for more than ten or fifteen years.

The natural ruin which overtook the edifices of Dacca at the end of the Nawābi period has filled sensitive observers with melancholy thoughts. Here are Sir Charles D'Oyly's reflections on the Remains of a Bridge near the Tāntee Bāzār,—" To the noise of mariners and ship-wrights which once resounded along the *nala*—to the bustle and pomp of commerce and princely equipage—has succeeded a degree of loneliness and silence: A sentiment of pensive serenity possesses the scene . . . In the midst of such a scene as this, passion is lulled; and the imagination, willingly enthralled by feelings of melancholy pleasure, is instinctively led to compare the

[1] Tavernier, who visited Dacca in 1666, wrote, " As for the residence of the governor, it is enclosed by high walls, in the midst of which there is a place constructed entirely of wood. It is usual to reside under tents, pitched in a large court within the enclosure ".

vicissitudes of human power and opinion, and the mutabilities of human art, with the permanence of nature itself! Here the Ganges flows on, as it has ever flowed, with silent majesty, whilst the multifarious works, which the art and industry of man have erected on its banks and across its channels, have successively fallen into its stream, or are crumbled to dust." (*Antiq. of Dacca*).

The same contrast struck the observant eyes of Bishop Heber ten years later (1824) :—" Two-thirds of the vast area of Dacca are filled with ruins, some quite desolate and overgrown with jungle, others yet occupied by Mussalman chieftains, the descendants of the followers of Shah Jahāngir and all the 'Lions of War, Prudent and Valiant Lords. Pillars of the Council, Swords of Battle,' and whatever other names of Khan, Amir, or Umra the Court of Delhi dispensed in the time of its greatness . . . Of the 3,00,000 inhabitants who roost like bats in these old buildings, or rear their huts amid their desolate gardens, three-fourths are still Mussalmans". (Heber's *Narrative*, 2nd ed. iii. 296).

Time and political change have almost entirely destroyed the vestiges of Mughal Dacca, and their very names and appearance would have been lost to posterity but for a happy chance. In 1808, a highly gifted artist and sensitive observer of architecture, Sir Charles D'Oyly went to Dacca as Collector and lovingly sketched the architectural remains of the Muslim period. Very beautiful steel engravings of his drawings by John Landseer, were published with descriptive letter-press, in London in six parts, (1824-1830) under the title of *The Antiquities of Dacca*, including "Some Account of the City of Dacca" in 30 pages, which latter was enriched with vignettes after Chinnery. From this work the following list of the old buildings, with the artist's description and comment has been compiled :—

1. The Great Katra, "a stupendous pile of grand and beautiful architecture, situate on the eastern bank of the river, near the centre of the city. . . The turrets are lofty, and of an octagonal form. It is divided into a vast number and variety of apartments, in which the poorest class of natives now take shelter." The Persian inscription in bold and beautiful semi-Tughra character set on it, tells us—" Sultan Shah Shujā' was employed in the performance of charitable acts. Therefore Ābul Qāsim Tabātabāi Husaini āl-Samnāni, in hopes of the mercy of God made a canonical *waqf* of this building of auspicious structure, together with 22 shops adjoining, subject to the condition that the administrators of the *waqf* should spend the income arising from their rent, in repairs and in relief of the poor. If a poor man alights here, no rent should be charged

from him for his lodging . . . This inscription was written by Sa'duddin Muhammad al-Shirazi, A. H. 1055" (A. D. 1645).

(2) Mosque of Saif Khan, said to have been begun by Rājā Mohan Singh as a Hindu temple in the reign of Jahāngir, but later completed by Saif Khan as a mosque. It is faced inside and outside with flat tiles covered with sentences from the *Qurān* in embossed characters. "In the architecture of this edifice—its panel-work, pointed arches, and hexagonal minarets—a composed variety is beautifully conspicuous. The ornaments are seen where the most classical taste would probably have placed them . . . It was originally surmounted by three domes".

(3) Mosque on the Burigangā, "one of the most ancient Muhammadan edifices in this part. Its octagonal, circular and rectangular forms are contrasted with considerable taste; and its breadth of plain wall kept in a composed distinct mass by rows of small pointed arches, fillets, and other enrichments. In the general proportions and character of its architecture, the principles of elegance and simplicity appear to be combined; and the *tout ensemble* can scarcely fail to impress the beholder with respect for the taste and talent of its architect. This mosque rises immediately from the margin of the river, with an effect at once stately and picturesque."

(4) The Small Katra, situated about a quarter of a mile to the east of the Great Katra. "Built by Shāista Khan (about 1664) There is a small one-domed mosque within its enclosure, which displays considerable architectural taste and talent. Its minarets rise somewhat like the shafts of elegant octangular columns, and are terminated by capitals of oriental foliage and fruit. The base of a large round column, which is placed beside the entrance, has a light, singular, and fanciful effect, seeming to stand as if on a vase. The dome is beautifully fluted."

(5) The palace called the Lāl Bāgh was begun by Prince Muhammad 'Āzam (1678), but was never completed on the magnificent scale of the original design. It was meant to include a fortress, of which two bastions joined by a long line of embrasures remained in D'Oyly's time. "Shāista Khan made considerable additions to the building, and his descendants are still proprietors of the Lāl Bāgh," (in 1810).

(6) The Fort, as it is now called, was erected by Ibrāhim Khan in 1690. It was formerly full of buildings, but "there is little more than a ruined wall with embrasures remaining" in 1814.

(7) The Husaini Dālān, is a stately mosque, standing beyond the Chauk or market, and was built in 1676.

(8) A small isolated building, situated on a *nālā* of the Ganges near the centre of Dacca, was popularly said to have been erected for measuring the height of the Ganges flood. Its notable features are rectangular panel work, arched perforations pointed at the top, its four stories lessening upwards both in length and breadth, which serve to lighten, in appearance, the massiveness of its pyramidal form. To the eastward of it is the remnant of a bridge which formerly gave access to foot passengers on that side. The building and the bridge are placed in a quadrangular pool, faced with a brick wall, and surrounded on three sides by a broad brick terrace.

(I believe, it was really a *jal-mahal* or water-palace, and served as a place of diversion and rest for the governor and his harem in certain seasons. *J. S.*)

(9) A Bridge near Tānti Bāzār, in ruin. "In its construction is displayed a considerable degree of architectural taste and talent. Its form and proportions are firm and elegant; its arch noble, and in its decoration, enrichment has been led on by simplicity."

(10, A Bridge on the Tangi.

(11) Pāglā Pul, a Bridge across the Qadamtalā river, with towers at each end of it, described by Tavernier as "a most elegant structure". Its remains struck D'Oyly as "still exceedingly picturesque".

(12) A Mosque in the suburbs on the road to Tangi. The Mosque on the Magh Bazar Road, drawn by D'Oyly appears from its style to be later than the 17th century, but no comparatively modern structure will be noticed in this section.

IX. Ibrāhim Khan subahdār, Shovā Singh and Rahim Khan rebel

Shāista Khan's immediate successor in Bengal was Khān-i-Jahān Bahādur, a worthless son of Aurangzib's nurse, who was removed from this office after one year (July 1688—June 1689). About him, Francois Martin, the governor of Pondicherry writes in his Diary,—"The Mughal has sent orders to Bahādur Khan to quit the viceroyalty of Bengal; there have been many complaints at the Court about the tyrannies and vexations of this noble. It is written [in letters from Bengal] that he has taken from the province during his 18 months [*sic*] charge of it, 15 to 20 millions of rupees." And three months later, November 1689, he records, "Received letters from Bengal. Bahādur Khan has retired from Bengal at last. It is confirmed that he took away with himself 20 million rupees (i. e.,

two krores) during the 18 months [*sic*] that he was in the province." [*Mémoire*, iii. 50 and 60.]

Next came Ibrāhim Khan, a son of the famous 'Ali Mardān Khan of Shah Jahān's reign. He was a pure Persian by birth and breeding, and had held the subahdāri of one province after another since 1662. When he reached Bengal he was already a weak old man. His disposition was mild, his habits sedentary, and his sole passion was to read Persian books. Without military abilities, he desired to administer justice with strict impartiality and to encourage agriculture and commerce. The English traders called him "the most famously just and good nabob", and the Muslim historian records that "he did not allow even an ant to be oppressed". (*Riyāz*, 223.)

Immediately after reaching Dacca, he released the English merchants who had been confined there by the Emperor's orders, and wrote letters to Job Charnock then at Madras, inviting him to return to Bengal and resume the English trade in this province. At last, on 24th August 1690, Agent Charnock with his Council and factors, landed at Sutānuti, and was well received by the Mughal officers of the district (Hughli). On 10th February 1691, an imperial order (i. e., *hasb-ul-hukm*) was issued under the seal of Āsad Khan the wazir, allowing the English to continue their trade in Bengal in composure of mind, on payment of Rs 3,000 yearly in lieu of all dues. Thus was founded the English settlement of Calcutta, destined in time to be the centre of a British Indian empire.

"The French establishment of Chandernagar, too, was legally constituted" at exactly the same time. Du Plessis had bought a piece of land, on the bank of the Ganges, four miles south of Hughli, at the village of Chandernagar, in 1674; but the Dutch out of jealousy influenced the subahdār to forbid the French to build any residence there. In April 1690 however, the agent Deslandes, by bribing the Nawāb's court at Dacca, secured full rights, and at once began to erect enclosing walls, brick houses, and large warehouses, of which the architect was the Jesuit Duchatz, and the estimated cost Rs 26,000. By July 1692, most of the work had been completed. By promising to pay the Emperor Rs 40,000 (one-fourth of it cash down and the balance in six yearly instalments of 5,000), Deslandes obtained (in January 1693) an imperial order giving the French the right to trade freely in Bengal, Bihar and Orissa, with the same privileges as the Dutch, and paying like the latter 3½ p.c. custom duty. (Kaeppelin, 321-322).

But before the century ended, the decline of the Mughal Government had become manifest to all. For over fifteen years

the Emperor had been personally fighting in the Deccan, and could not yet return to Delhi with victory. Crushing defeats were inflicted on his armies and his highest generals by the Marathas, and reports of these disasters reached every province and destroyed the fear and prestige of the government. Everywhere the lawless elements raised their heads. Ibrāhim Khan's indolent unmartial character and supine administration, encouraged a rising which for the first time broke the deep peace that Bengal had enjoyed since the accession of Shah Jahān.

Shovā Singh, a zamindār of Cheto-Bardā in the Ghāṭāl-Chandrakona subdivision of Medinipur, took to plundering his neighbours, about the middle of 1695. Rajah Krishna Rām, a Panjabi Khatri, who held the contract for the revenue collection of the Bardwan district, opposed the brigand with a small force, but was defeated and slain (*c.* January 1696). His wife and daughters were captured by Shovā Singh, who took the town of Bardwan itself with all the Rajah's property. With the vast wealth thus gained the rebel leader greatly increased his army, took the title of Raja, and began to plunder and occupy the neighbouring country. Rahim Khan, the leader of the Orissa Afghans, joined him and greatly increased his military strength.

After Krishna Rām's death his son Jagat Rāy had fled to the viceroy at Dacca. Ibrāhim Khan at first underrated the danger, and neglected to take strong measures for restoring order, as he fondly hoped that the rebels would disperse of themselves when gorged with plunder.

Nurullah Khan, the faujdār of west Bengal, was ordered to march against Shovā Singh. But their unchecked success had greatly swelled the ranks of the rebels, and heightened the terror of their arms. Nurullah, whose main business had been private trade, timidly shut himself up in the fort of Hughli, which the rebels soon surrounded. On 22nd July 1696, the cowardly faujdār and garrison fled away from Hughli by night, and a detachment of Shovā Singh's army entered the town and plundered it. But the Dutch of Chinsurā, at the appeal of the faujdār and the fugitive notables of Hughli, sent 300 of their soldiers to attack that town on the land side, while two of their ships sailed up and bombarded the ramparts from the river. At this the rebel garrison (200 horse and two to three hundred foot) escaped from Hughli by the back door. But the country on the west bank of the Ganges continued in the hands of the rebels; they made daily raids on the villages up to the very walls of Chandernagar, and fought the Government or jāgirdārs' men who opposed them. In this way Shovā Singh built up a State of his

own some 180 miles in length along the bank of the Ganges, with Hughli in its middle, and levied tolls and custom duties on the river traffic.

After his expulsion from Hughli (end of July 1696), Shovā Singh retired to Bardwan, leaving Rahim Khan in command. At Bardwan in making an attempt upon the honour of Raja Krishna Rām's daughter, Shovā Singh was stabbed to death by that heroic girl, who next plunged the dagger, into her own heart. His brother Himmat Singh succeeded him, but he was a worthless voluptuary, and the rebel army chose Rahim as their chief, who crowned himself, taking the title of Rahim Shāh. Rahim's army had now increased to 10,000 horse and 60,000 infantry—really a vast medley of vagabonds and adventurers of all kinds. By way of Nadiā he advanced to Makhsusābād (modern Murshidābād). In the suburbs of the latter town, he was opposed by a loyal jagirdar named Na'mat Khan, who died with his nephew Tahawwar Khan, after fighting desperately almost single-handed. After defeating a Government force of 5000, Rahim took and plundered Makhsusabad, while the neighbouring silk emporium of Qāsimbāzār saved itself by paying ransom (September 1696). Smaller bands spread all over the country, looting, burning, and forcing the people to join them. Before the end of this year, he took Rajmahal, and in March 1697 Malda itself. Evidently Himmat Singh stayed in Qāsimbāzār, while Rahim campaigned further north. But the threat to Hughli city and the disorder in the district around continued till April 1697.

Then the tide began to turn. Immediately on getting full reports of the rising and Ibrāhim Khan's negligence, the Emperor dismissed him from the viceroyalty and appointed his grandson 'Azim-ud-din to Bengal (middle of 1697). Pending the Prince's arrival, Ibrāhim Khan's son Zabardast Khan was ordered to take the field against the rebels, without delay. This energetic and capable young general, getting together what men and guns he could gather in a short time, arrived in the Murshidabad district. Rahim Khan formed an entrenched camp on the left bank of the Ganges at Bhagwāngolā, which was suddenly attacked by Zabardast. The imperial artillery, well served by Feringi gunners, made havoc in the crowded ranks of the rebels and silenced their guns. After a two days' fight the Afghans were routed and their camp captured, (May 1697). Detachments of the imperial cavalry made a rapid detour and recovered Rājmahal and Māldā, while Zabardast Khan, after his victory on the Ganges, resumed his march and drove Himmat and Rahim successively out of Makhsusābād and Bardwan back into the jungle of Chandrakonā.

The monsoon now put an end to the fighting; Zabardast Khan encamped at Bardwan and the Prince at Mungir for this period of inactivity. In November, the Prince arrived near Bardwan. Zabardast Khan, was received with so much coldness and slight after his splendid victories, that he resigned his command in disgust, and left Bengal along with his father on return to the imperial camp in the Deccan (January 1698).

'Azimuddin halted for nearly a year at Bardwan, without taking any vigorous action. Zabardast Khan's retirement greatly weakened the Mughal army in Bengal. The rebels now came out of their jungle retreats and renewed their raids on all sides. Rahim, after again plundering the Nadiā and Hughli districts, arrived near Bardwan. Here the Prince vainly tried to pacify him by negotiation. But the treacherous Afghan lured the Prince's chief minister Khwāja Ānwār to a friendly interview and there slew him. Then at last the Prince sent his army against the rebels, who were defeated near Chandrakonā and their leader Rahim was beheaded by Hamid Khan Qureshi (afterwards created Shamshir Khan Bahādur and faujdār of Sylhet, in reward of this feat). This battle was fought early in August 1698 (*Akhbarat,* 11 Sep. Salimullah). The leaderless rebel army melted away; some of the men were taken into Mughal service, the rest returned to their homes and tillage.

These disturbances had a consequence unknown before in the history of Bengal, and which was destined to influence future events in an unexpected manner. When public order disappeared and the Mughal administration collapsed, the three European settlements in Bengal—Calcutta, Chandernagar and Chinsurā applied to Ibrāhim Khan at Dacca for permission to fortify their factories. The viceroy in general terms ordered them to defend themselves. This was the beginning of Fort William. Fort D,Orleans, and Chinsurā ramparts. At Calcutta the English merchants built walls and bastions round their factory (in the modern Dalhousie Square) and certain works which were dignified with the name of a fort, mounted guns on the ramparts, and substituted a structure of brick and mud for the old thatched house which used to contain the Company's stores and provisions. Further more, " 'Azim-ush-shān was lazy and covetous. In July 1698, for the sum of Rs 16,000 the English procured letters patent from the Prince, allowing them to purchase from the existing holders the right of renting the three villages of Sutānuti (north), Calcutta (centre) and Govindpur (south), and thus the security of Calcutta was completely assured". (Wilson, i. 147-150).

At Chandernagar, Francois Martin in November 1696 raised palisades round the French *loge* and also a bastion of earth on the

side facing the river; and in April 1697, he built a second bastion for flanking the four curtains of Chandernagar "which thus assumed the aspect of a small fortress". (Kaeppelin. 339-340) Similarly, the Dutch fortified their factory in Chinsurā with walls. All three nations enlisted temporary bands of Indian soldiers,—Rajputs and "Baksarias", to augment their handful of white soldiers and sailors. Then was seen a spectacle which no Indian can remember without shame: the sovereign of the country could not protect his subjects, and every Indian of wealth and every Government official of the neighbourhood who could, took refuge in these forts of foreigners to save their lives and honour. The same thing was witnessed about the same time in Maḍras and Pondicherry during the anarchical wars between the Mughals and the Marathas in the Eastern Carnatic.

CHAPTER XXI.

BENGAL UNDER MURSHID QULI KHAN

I. Influence of Murshid Quli and Alivardi on the life of Bengal

Prince Muhammad 'Azim-ud-din (later entitled 'Azim-ush-shān) arrived at Bardwan and took charge of the government of Bengal in November 1697. For the next three years he had a free hand in Bengal, but thereafter a new force entered the Bengal administration which was destined to oust the Prince in less than three years and to leave an abiding mark on the history of our province. This was Murshid Quli Khan, the new provincial diwān, who came here in December 1700 and died in June 1727, as subahdār and the founder of an independent provincial dynasty.

In the first half of the 18th century when disorder and revolution were desolating other provinces of the dying Mughal empire, it was the singular good fortune of Bengal that it passed into the hands of two rulers of exceptional ability, strength of character and long life. For over half a century Murshid Quli and Alivardi Khan between them maintained peace, increased the wealth and trade of the country, and above all else cast the administration into a new mould, which it retained long after the sceptre had passed into British hands. The land revenue system taken over by the English was in its main features the creation of Murshid Quli Khan, and it was continued in a more refined but more rigid form under Cornwallis's Permanent settlement. For a century before the modernisation of Bengal society and administration by what we call the Indian Renaissance, our ancestors lived worked and suffered in many different lines as Murshid Quli Khan had taught them to do, and our British governors only added something to the superstructure, while the basis remained the same as before.

Murshid Quli and Alivardi between them also gave this province a peace unknown in that age elsewhere in India. No repercussion of the dynastic revolutions at Delhi reached Bengal except in the change of the name on the coin. Marāthā incursion which convulsed and transformed the face of Mālwa and Gujrāt, Khāndesh and Berār, was felt in Bengal as merely a passing blast (1743-'52); it touched the fringe of the province and at the very end (1752) only tore away Orissa from Bengal.

But though Murshid Quli and his successors greatly increased the volume of the State income and gave it permanence and ease of collection, though the foreign trade of the province expanded by leaps and bounds in their times, yet in the light of after events he must be pronounced a glorified civil servant only, a masterly collector and accountant, a brainy departmental head, but no statesmanlike leader possessed of vision. He did nothing to give permanence to his system, he created no efficient civil service, no council of notables to serve as a check on the caprice of tyrants and preserve the balance of the State in evil days to come. Above all, his one absorbing passion for filling the State coffers made him neglect the national defence and cut down the regular internal security force of Bengal to 2000 cavalry and 4000 infantry. The Buxar Rajputs and the Afghans of Bihar could have supplied him with hardly musketeers and sturdy heavy cavalry. But he did not tap this source of martial power. In the hour of foreign attack his successor was to learn that an army cannot be improvised in a day. The artillery (including the musketeers) was starved of the powder and shot required in training and had to rust without practice or improvement in the type of its guns.

The gorgeous luxury of the Nawab's court at Murshidabad and the huge "surplus revenue" from Bengal which fed the imbecile pauper Court of Delhi should not blind our eyes to the utter weakness of the Bengal Government when confronted with the myriads of light horsemen from the Deccan or the steady musketry and accurate artillery of the handful of white troops and their Indian pupils, only a generation after Murshid Quli's death. The incredible contrast in numbers between the victors and the vanquished at Plassey is a matter of shame to us, no doubt; but still more humiliating is the political blindness and administrative corruption of the preceding years which made such a defeat of the Nawabi Government possible.

II. Murshid Quli's life-story and his influence over Aurangzib

Murshid Quli Khan's service-career in Bengal can be traced step by step with exact details and dates from the Persian news-letters (*ākhbārāt*) of the imperial Court and Aurangzib's last Secretary's letters, which have been now discovered, and the prevailing errors—some of which occur even in such modern works as C. R. Wilson's *Early Annals of the English in Bengal*, (1895-1900) can be easily corrected.

1700, 17th November. Kār Talb Khan, then the diwān of Haidarabad and faujdār of Yelkondal, is appointed by the Emperor Aurangzib as diwān of Bengal (*vice* Ghairat Khan) and also faujdār of Makhsusābād.

1701, 23rd July. He is appointed, in addition, faujdār of Midnapur and Bardwan, and on 4th August diwān of Orissā also. 10th October, he is given the diwāni of Prince 'Azimuddin's estates in Bengal.

1702, 23rd December. He is given the title of Murshid Quli Khan.

1703, 21st January. He is appointed deputy-subahdār (and soon afterwards full subahdār) of Orissā, in addition to his Bengal posts. Visits Orissa, April-Dec. 1704.

1704, 18th January. He is given the diwāni of Bihār also, but administers it through a deputy without visiting the province.

1707, 15th July. He is appointed deputy subahdār of Bengal, in addition, but loses this post on 18th November when Prince Farrukh Siyar replaces him.
8th October. M. Q. is removed from the diwāni of Bengal and the faujdāri of Makhsusābād, which are conferred on Ziāullah Khan, but he retains the subahdāri of Orissā.

1708, 19th January. M. Q. is removed from the subahdāri of Orissā and appointed diwān of the Deccan. (*He was absent from Bengal throughout 1708 and 1709*).

1710, c. 20th January, Diwān Ziāullah is killed by the *naqdi* soldiers in Murshidabad. On 20th February, Murshid Quli is appointed diwān of Bengal and also manager of Prince 'Azim-ush-shān's estates, with the rank of a three *hazāri zāt* (2,000 *sawār*), but not subahdār of Orissā.

1711, 11th September. M. Q. is appointed faujdar of Midnāpur and of Hughli port *vice* Ziā-ud-din.

1713, September. M. Q. made deputy subahdār of Bengal.

1714, 6th May. M. Q. is also made subahdār of Orissā, with the title of Ja'far Khan.

1717, 19th October. Emperor receives Ja'far Khan's *nazarāna* of one lakh rupees on appointment as full subahdār of Bengal, with the title of Mutaman-ul-mulk 'Ala-ud-daula Ja'far Khan Bahadur, Nasiri, Nāsir Jang.

1727, 30th June. Ja'far Khan dies.

Murshid Quli Khan was by birth a Brahman. As a boy, he was sold to Hāji Shafi' Isfahāni, who made him a Muslim with the name of Muhammad Hādi, brought him up like a son, and took him to Persia. He there grafted the refinement, orderliness and wisdom

of the Persian race on the intelligence and industry of his Brahman stock. I am tempted to imagine that he was a South Indian Brahman, like another supremely exalted Hindu convert, Maqbul, whom Firuz Shāh Tughlaq cherished as the jewel of a minister, and to whom much of the success of that reign was due. This Shafi' Khan became *diwān-i-tan* of the empire of Delhi in 1668 and again in 1689, retiring in February 1690. In the interval he had been diwān of Bengal (in 1678 and 1680) and of the Deccan (1683-89). Thus Md. Hādi learnt the work of the diwāni department by practice under the best of masters. When Shafi' retired to Persia in 1690, his adopted son accompanied him, but returned to India after his patron's death (probably in 1696). Here he was employed for a short time by another Persian, Hāji 'Abdullah Khurāsāni the diwān of Berār. His extraordinary ability soon became known and the Emperor took Md. Hādi into his own service and appointed him diwān of Haidarabad and faujdār of Yelkondal (*c.* 1698). In this post, directly under the Emperor's eyes, he further heightened his reputation, and when a highly capable officer was needed for reforming the revenue administration of Bengal, Md. Hādi was selected by Aurangzib for the post (Nov. 1700).

Thus Muhammad Hādi had forced himself up to the second highest place in the richest province of the Empire by sheer merit and in a very short time. Naturally he was regarded with envy, tinctured with contempt as for an upstart, by the old gang of lazy inefficient well-born hereditary official class. But the Emperor's unwavering trust stifled all opposition to Md. Hādi, and his power was increased year by year. The older officers and even princes of the blood learnt that to go against this diwān was to court their own disgrace at the hands of their supreme master.

Although Murshid Quli Khan was not officially either subahdār or deputy subahdār of Bengal before 1713, his power was indisputable from the outset. As diwān he was the supreme head of the revenue administration in the province; in addition to which, as faujdār of Makhsusābād, Midnapur, Bardwān (1701) and later of Hughli, with his nominee in Sylhet, he exercised the executive functions of a district magistrate and criminal judge (excluding only crimes triable under the Muslim Canon Law and capital offences) over half the province.

Murshid Quli being a *novum homo* was at first disobeyed and publicly slighted by the older class of officials, even of lower rank, especially the *Kokas* or sons of the wet-nurses of the Emperor's sons and grandsons. These men, on the strength of their personal influence in the royal harem, could always get letters of intercession

from the princes and princesses to the Emperor against the diwān's decisions. But Murshid Quli was a strong man and knew his strength. The correspondence of Aurangzib presents us with an amusing picture of the Emperor forwarding these appeals to Murshid Quli but leaving him absolutely free to issue any orders he liked.

Thus in Bengal, Murshid Quli Khan was left dominant. When he came to Bengal as diwān at the beginning of 1701, the far-flung and never-ending warfare in which Aurangzib had been engaged for the twenty years past had reduced the royal family, court and army to starvation. Salaries, both civil and military, had fallen into arrears for full three years, and the grain-dealers in the Deccan camp had refused further credit. On such a background the regular flow of one kror of rupees every year from Bengal which began in 1702 under Murshid Quli's management of the finances, made the new diwān appear as a life-saving angel in the eyes of the Emperor. His boundless confidence in this officer is reflected in his letters.

Aurangzib to Murshid Quli.—"You have written, 'Partners in my work and other selfish people are openly boasting that (in their reports to the imperial Court) they would write whatever they thought proper; and the zamindars on the spreading of this news, are withholding the payment of their due revenue. If the Emperor does not remedy it, lakhs of rupees would again be lost (to the State). . . . I have increased the cultivation of the country and gathered krors of rupees in revenue. But as selfish men are destroying my work, I pray some other servant may be appointed in my place.' (This threat of resignation had immediate effect; Aurangzib replied,—) "I do not see your point clearly. You are diwān and faujdār with full power, and nobody's allegation against you is acceptable to me. Why do you entertain doubts (about my trust in you) prompted by Satan? God guard us from such wickedness! Who are your 'partners' and what is their object? Keep in view my favour and instructions, give no place to apprehension in your heart, and exert yourself even more earnestly than before in collecting the revenue".[1]

Aurangzib's admiration for Murshid Quli's ability and honesty was boundless. He wrote in 1704, "One and the same man is diwān of Bengal and Bihār, and nāzim and diwān of Orissā, with absolute authority. I myself have not the capacity for doing so much work; perhaps only "a man chosen by God" is gifted with the requisite ability. You ought to get reports (about M. Q's actual adminis-

[1] 'Ināyetullah's *Ahkām*, 218. The same assurance is repeated in another letter (*Ibid*, 220b), "Thank God! You are the object of the Emperor's favours and you should engage in doing your duties with perfect composure of mind. Protect the ryots and make them prosper."

tration) from some impartial person by tactful persuasion. The nāzim of the subah cannot breathe (at ease) on observing (such accumulation of power in one hand.)" ('Ināyet. *Āhkām,* 198.) Substantial proofs of the Emperor's trust were received by Murshid Quli during Aurangzib's reign. Owing to the extension of his functions, he received repeated promotions from his initial mansab of 900 *zat* (500 troopers.) His nominees were appointed to faujdāries setting aside the recommendations of the prince; *e. g.,* Abdur Rahmān was appointed as dārogha of the *nawwāra;* two news-writers Salimullah and Md. Khalil were dismissed on his complaint; and a posting to Orissā was cancelled.

In January 1704, fourteen relatives of Murshid Quli on migration from Irān reached Delhi, and at his request the Emperor granted mansabs to each of them according to his capacity, in Bengal. ('Ināyet, *Āhkām,* 115*a,* 218*b,* 220a, 116.)

III. 'Azim-ush-shān and Murshid Quli at variance

Prince Muhammad 'Azimuddin (generally known by his later title of 'Azim-ush-shān, 1707) was the ablest of the sons of Bahādur Shāh I (the eldest surviving son of Aurangzib.) He had great intelligence and a strong will, but lacked diplomatic tact, the spirit of sustained work, and the power of managing a party. His governorship of Bengal extended from 1697 to 1712, but during the last nine years of this period he was an absentee and governed through agents only. Here he was known as lazy and covetous, his sole aim being to amass money from this rich province for supporting his own claim in the war of succession which, everybody knew, would break out in the near future, as the extremely aged Emperor Aurangzib could not last much longer. This motive of the prince was clearly detected by the French and English traders in Bengal.

The easiest and longest-practised device for sucking the subject people was to conduct, on behalf of the governor, a trade monopoly in most necessaries of life and in many precious objects as well. It meant in effect the engrossing of merchandise at their places of origin or at the ports of unloading, and forcing them on the retail dealers at heightened prices. This evil practice had prevailed in Bengal from Shujā's time; Mir Jumla and Shāista Khan had indulged in it; and now 'Azim's officers plunged into it without moderation or shame. They called it *sauda-i-khās* or the personal trade of His Excellency. The report of it reached Aurangzib, and he sent the following letter to the prince:

"My grandson 'Azim, like me forgetful of God the Karim (gracious) ! It is not well to oppress the people who have been entrusted to us by the Creator, particularly it is a very wicked act on the part of the sons of kings. Ever bear in your mind the Prophet's precepts on Truth—'Death is an eternal verity (*Haqq*), so is Resurrection, so is the bridge across hell, so is the reckoning for your secret acts'. Consider yourself every hour as one destined to pass away, so that . . . the blossoms of your desires may not be withered by the sighs of the oppressed. Whence have you learnt this *sauda-i-khās* (private trade), which is only another name for pure insanity? Not certainly from your grand-father, nor from your father. Better turn your thoughts away from it." (*Sauda* in Arabic means madness.)

His private trade being thus stopped, 'Azimuddin could make money only by laying his hands on the State revenue and squeezing the people. His underlings continued to make illegal exactions on the peasants and traders and thus reduced the legitimate income of the Exchequer at its source. The prince also overdrew his sanctioned pay and allowances. Murshid Quli Khan restored order to the finances of Bengal by at once stopping such irregular action. He had to save every rupee and create a surplus for remittance to the starving imperial Court and army in the Deccan. The prince, enraged by the strictness of the diwān, inspired the rowdy cash-paid horsemen (*naqdi*) of the capital to set upon Murshid Quli on the pretext of demanding their arrears of pay and killing him in the confusion. It is a fact that the new diwān was at first unable to pay the soldiers' dues, because, as he explained to the Emperor, the collectors of the land set apart for this purpose had peculated the rent received by them, and Murshid Quli's first care being to accumulate a treasure for despatch to the Emperor, he had been delayed in clearing the soldiers' dues.

One morning as Murshid Quli was riding out in the streets of Dacca to pay his daily respects to the governor, 'Abdul Wāhid, the *naqdi* captain with a party of his men (secretly instigated by 'Azimuddin) crowded round him, clamouring for instant payment. The diwān, who was ever on the alert and travelled with an armed escort, boldly faced the mob, broke through their line and riding up to 'Azim-ud-din's court, openly accused bim of having inspired this plot against his life,[1] and defied him to do his worst then and

[1] We find that on 1st July 1699, an order was issued by the Emperor reducing 'Azimuddin's rank from 10-*hazāri zāt* (6,000 tr.) to 9-*hazāri zāt* (5,000 tr.) But it could not have been in punishment for this plot, which occurred 3 years later. Evidently it was for the *sauda-i-khās*.

there. Laying his hand on his belt-dagger, he cried out to the prince, "All this tumult is your doing. Abstain from such acts, or here is my life and here your life." The prince, confounded by the unexpected failure of his plot and trembling in fear of the Emperor's wrath, at once climbed down. He called up 'Abdul Wāhid, censured him, and tried to reassure the diwān. Murshid Quli immediately afterwards went to his office and calling for the accounts of this corps, issued orders for the payment of their full dues on the zamindars and at once dismissed the whole force from service.

He then caused a detailed report of the occurrence to be entered in the official newsletter (*waqia'*) and sent to the Emperor. In order to find safety in a place at a distance from the prince, Murshid Quli chose for his residence the town of Makhsusābād, in the centre of Bengal and more conveniently situated than Dacca for keeping in touch with all parts of the province. Here he transferred his office with the entire diwāni staff and the agents of the zamindārs in attendance on him. The name of the city was, many years later changed with the Emperor's permission to *Murshid-ābād*. The Emperor censured the prince and warned him that if a hair of Murshid Quli Khan's head were injured, retribution for it would be exacted from 'Azim-ud-din. An imperial rescript informed the diwān of Bengal, "The nāzim and other officers appointed to the subah will behave more gently (to you) than before, otherwise they would be reprimanded". ('Ināy, *Āhkām*, 155).

At the end of the year 1702, news was received of the death of 'Askar Khan the subahdār of Orissā. The vacant post was conferred on prince 'Azim-uddin, but a fortnight later on the representation of Murshid Quli, the prince's appointment was cancelled and the Bengal diwān (who was also the Orissā diwān) was given charge of the executive administration of the latter province too, though his elevation was at first concealed by calling him *nāib* subahdār and faujdār (or *hāris*, i. e., defender) of Orissā (21 Jan. 1703). After some months the mask was thrown off, and he was declared subahdār. At the same time (21 January 1703), prince 'Azim was given in addition the subahdāri of Bihār *vice* Shamsher Khan. Six months later (29th July) the prince was ordered to leave his son Farrukh Siyar as his deputy in Bengal, with half his contingent, and himself remove to Bihār. At first he went to Rājmahal, but finding the royal quarters built there by Shujā in ruin and the climate bad, he removed to Pātna and made it his official capital. This city he was permitted to name '*Azimābād* after himself, 1704. ('Ināyet. *Āhkām*. 117*b*. 116*b*. 220*a*.)

From Patna the Prince wrote to his grandfather in a tone of

injured virtue, "As my subahs are situated far away from the Emperor's presence, my calumniators get opportunities in various ways (for traducing me.) If I am given charge of subahs near the imperial camp, the truth or falsity of every man's words (against me) would become manifest to His Majesty."

But no injustice was ever done to 'Azim-ud-din. He was commended in a *farmān* and his rank was increased by 2,000 troopers for his success against Sudhisht (the son of Dhir Ujjhiniā, a refractory zamindar of Shāhābād district) and other rebels of Bihār (in 1705). When at the end of the year 1706 he left Pātna for the imperial camp, he carried away with himself about eight *krors* of rupees which he had succeeded in accumulating during his nine years' rule over Bengal and Bihar.

IV. Career of Murshid Quli after Aurangzib's death

Murshid Quli Khan enjoyed supreme influence with the imperial Government while Aurangzib lived. He was then a commander of 1500 in nominal rank (*zāt mansab*), and neither subahdār nor deputy subahdār of Bengal; but though Farrukh Siyar lived at Dacca as the agent (*nāib*) of his father 'Azim-ud-din, the absentee subahdār of the province, that young prince was under orders of Aurangzib to obey the diwān as his guardian. After Aurangzib's death and the battle of Jajau (8 June 1707), the new Emperor Bahādur Shah I, redistributed the offices of State. His son 'Azim-ud-din was created 'Azim-ush-shān, and again appointed subahdār of Bengal and Bihār; but he lived with his father for the rest of his life and governed these two provinces through his sons Farrukh Siyar and Karim-ud-din respectively as *nāib* subahdārs. At the beginning of the new reign, as a temporary arrangement, Murshid Quli had been made deputy governor of Bengal (15 July to 18 Nov. 1707). But 'Azim-ush-shān soon began to dominate the will of his soft and aged father, and paid his hated rival in Bengal fully back for all that he had suffered silently in the days of his stern grandfather. Murshid Quli was replaced as *nāib* nāzim of Bengal by Farrukh Siyar (18 Nov.), as diwān of Bengal by Ziāullah Khan (18 Oct.), and as subahdār of Orissā by Farrukh Siyar (19 Jan. next year, 1708). He was transferred as diwān to the Deccan and thus kept out of Bengal for full two years, 1708 and 1709.

About 20th January 1710, Ziāullah the diwān of Bengal was killed in the streets of Murshidābād by the mutinous *naqdi* troopers and the diwānship was conferred on Murshid Quli (20. Feb.) with

the high rank of a 3-hazāri *zāt* (2,000 troopers) and the honour of kettledrums (April).

Throughout Bahādur Shah's reign (which ended on 17 Feb. 1712) 'Azim-ush-shān remained officially subahdār of Bengal, and when he was killed (7th March 1712) and Jahāndār Shāh gained the throne no new subahdār reached this province, but Farrukh Siyar continued as deputy governor. After Murshid Quli's dismissal from Bengal, Sarbuland Khan had been sent by the imperial Government to manage Bengal on behalf of the prince, (appointed January, 1709, arrived May, dismissed November, the same year.) Farrukh Siyar was reappointed *nāib nāzim* in Nov. 1709. Next came Sipahdār Khan (surnamed Khan-i-'Ālam II, Khan-i-Jahān II, Dilir Jang, 'Izzudaulah), appointed *nāib Nāzim* in January 1711. During Jahāndār Shāh's short reign (1712) Khan-i-Jahān continued to act as subahdār of Bengal, but was removed from that office on the accession of Farrukh Siyar (at Delhi, 9 January, 1713) and the viceroyalty of Bengal was granted on paper to the new Emperor's infant son, Farkhunda Siyar, with Murshid Quli Khan as his deputy. The infant died in a few months (2 May 1713), and then the Bengal subahdāri was conferred on Mir Jumla (U'bāidullah Muzaffar Jang, Khān-i-Khānān, Mu'tamid-ul-mulk), *in absentia,* with Murshid Quli as his deputy. Mir Jumla continued to stay at Delhi Court and was given *congé* for his charge on Dec. 1714, but after reaching Patna *en route* (18 June 1715) did not proceed further, and finally sneaked back to Delhi (10 January 1716). Murshid Quli Khan (now officially known as 'Alaulmulk Ja'far Khan, Nasiri, Nāsir Jang, Mutaman-ul-mulk) was formally appointed subahdār of Bengal shortly before August 1717, and continued at the post till his death on 30th June 1727.

Bahādur Shāh's death (Feb. 1712) was followed by a war of succession among his four sons in Lahore, which left the throne to Jahāndār Shāh, the sole survivor among them (entered Delhi March 1712). But Farrukh Siyar, the son of 'Azim-ush-shān, then at Patna, made a claim to the throne and sent an officer to Murshid Quli to demand the government treasure in Bengal. The diwān very properly refused, on the ground that as a servant he owed his obedience to that Timurid prince who was then sitting on the Delhi throne, and Farrukh Siyar was a mere competitor. Money was urgently needed by Farrukh Siyar for his supreme adventure, and Bengal was the only mine of silver left in the Mughal Empire. So, the prince sent a small detachment from his contingent in Patna, under Timur Beg, to march against Murshid Quli and bring back either his treasure or his head. This detachment received additions

on the way (under Mirzā Ja'far, Mirzā Rizā and Gāndāra Singh) making it 2,000 horse and 1000 foot. Their chief commander was Rashid Khan (a brother of Mirzā Ajmeri Afrāsiyāb Khan, the Kokah of Prince Md. Akbar). In a long drawn and changeful battle fought on the Karimābād plain outside Murshidabād, about the middle of May 1712, Rashid Khan was killed and his army routed by Mir Bangāli (the diwān's general), though the latter's colleague Sayyid Ānwār fell on the field. To avenge this reverse, Farrukh Siyar detached another force (intended to be 5,000 strong) from Patna under Ibrāhim Husain. But that general was halted at the western frontier of Bengal by reason of the Sikrigali pass having been blocked by Khān-i-Jahān. Meantime the threat to Farrukh Siyar's partisans near Agra by Jahāndār Shāh's army under his son, forced the former prince to recall Ibrāhim Husain and proceed to the western front with all his men, (left Patna on 12th September, 1712).

When Farrukh Siyar gained the throne (at Delhi, Feb. 1713) Murshid Quli loyally sent the provincial tribute to the new Emperor. He was confirmed in the diwāni of Bengal, and also (in September 1713) made deputy subahdār of Bengal, while next year (6 May 1714) the subahdāri of Orissā was again conferred on him, with the title of Ja'far Khan. But the full subahdāri of Bengal came to him only in September 1717, as his thanks-offering for the post (one lakh of rupees) was received at the imperial Court on the 19th October of that year.[1] Early in the third year of Farrukh Siyar's reign (Jan 1715) we learn that Murshid Quli had already remitted to the new Emperor Rs 2,40,68,000 in all, including the land revenue due to the crown, the yield of the *jāgir* of Mir Jumla (a Court favourite and nominal subahdār of Bengal), the reserve in the provincial treasury, and the tributes received from zamindārs. (*Ākhbārāt*).

We shall now turn to Murshid Quli Khan's work in the province. After his reappointment as diwān in February 1710, he moved the imperial Court and secured (on 11th Sept. 1711) an order placing the collectorship of customs at Hughli port and the faujdāri of the Midnapur district, then held by Ziā-ud-din Khan, again under the provincial diwān's control, from which they had been removed and placed directly under the Central Government two years before.

[1] A popular error must be corrected here. Murshid Quli was never subahdār or deputy subahdār of Bihār, but only diwān of that province, and that too under Aurangzib, with whose death his connection with Bihar ceased. So long as 'Azim-ud-din was in Bihār (i. e., to the end of 1706), M. Q. did not personally visit Bihār even once. 'Ināy, *Akh. 222a.*

This Ziā-ud-din was a nephew of Fāzil Khan (Mullā 'Ala-ul-mulk Tuni, a most learned Persian scholar and one of the highest ministers of Shah Jahān, who died as Aurangzib's grand wazir in June 1663) and a son-in-law of Burhān-ud-din (Fāzil Khan II,) the Lord High Steward of Aurangzib. In pride of his high connections, Ziāuddin publicly defied and slighted the upstart diwān of Bengal. In this foolish game his henchman was a Bengali named Kinkar Sen (his head clerk). When Murshid Quli's agent Wali Beg approached Hugli, Ziāuddin refused to give up his charge or to render accounts of the custom collections during his tenure, but entrenched himself with his followers. Wali Beg established his own camp near the tank of Devidās, a mile and a half in front of his rival's position, outside Chandernagar. Here the two parties remained quarrelling for over a year, but only light skirmishes were fought by a few men. Ziā-ud-din secretly bought arms and hired mercenaries from the French and Dutch traders of the neighbourhood. The English of Calcutta wisely stood neutral, and repeatedly tried to effect a friendly compromise between the two parties, but without success. On 10th November 1712, Mir Ābu Turāb arrived near Hugli at the head of reinforcements sent by Murshid Quli, but could not dislodge Ziāuddin from Hugli. At last on 22nd April 1713, the dismissed officer received news that the Emperor had appointed him diwān of the western Karnātak, and he left Hugli at the end of June when Murshid Quli's representative got possession of the port. When Murshid Quli was firmly in the saddle, he crushed Kinkar Sen, like a gravel (*kankar*) under his shoe,—to use his own simile.[1]

V. Murshid Quli's Revenue System and its effect

When Murshid Quli Khan first came to Bengal he found that the Government itself received no income from the land revenue of the province, and all the country was allotted to the officers as *jāgir* in lieu of their pay. Thus the only money that came into the State treasury was the custom duty; hence, the pressure exercised by the subahdārs and diwāns of Bengal on the European traders, who were the biggest dealers in the province and bought and sold goods worth millions of rupees every year.

Murshid Quli adopted a twofold plan for increasing the revenue,

[1] "Ja'far Khan apparently forgave Kinkar Sen, but bore a grudge in his heart. He appointed him Uhdadār of the chākla of Hugli, and at the end of the year when he came to Murshidābād, confined him on pretence of malversation. He ordered him to be fed with nothing but buffaloes' milk and salt, which occasioning a disorder in the bowels, he died soon after his return to Hugli".

(Salimullah)

—First, to turn all the officers' *jāgirs* in Bengal into *khālsa*, directly under the Crown collectors, and give the dispossessed officers in exchange *jāgirs* in the poor, wild and unsubdued province of Orissā. Secondly, to give contracts for the collection of the land revenue (the *ijāra* system.) Before this the State used to get its dues from the land in the lump, from the old landed proprietors of Bengal, called zamindārs. Some of them were decayed scions of old Hindu ruling houses, but most were the descendants of the hereditary local officials and barons of the old Hindu and Muslim dynasties of the days before the coming of Mughal sovereignty. Like all aristocracies, these men had now fallen into indolence, negligence, and improvidence, and the State could have no certainty of collection or regularity of income from the land if the old zamindārs continued in charge of it. The direct collection of land-rent from the actual cultivators by State officials, which prevailed in Upper India under Todar Mal's *zabti* system, was impossible in Bengal. Hence, Murshid Quli began to collect the land revenue through *ijāra-dārs* or contractors, like the *fermiers générals* of France, by taking security bonds from them. This was his *māl zāmini* system. Many of the older zamindārs remained, but under the thumbs of these new ijāra-dārs, and in time they were crushed out of existence. In the second or third generation, these contractors came to be called zamindārs and many of them were dignified with the title of Rajas and Mahārajas, though not of princely birth, but merely glorified civil servants paid by a percentage on their collections. Indeed, under Murshid Quli and the Permanent Settlement of Cornwallis, our hereditary landed families of historical origin (except a few small fry) were extinguished and their places were taken by new men of the official and capitalist classes. In choosing his contractors, Murshid Quli always gave preference to Hindus and to new men of that sect, as most of the Muslim collectors before his time were found to have embezzled their collections and it was impossible to recover the money from them.[1] He thus created a new landed

[1] Salimullah writes,—"Murshid Quli Khan employed none but Bengali Hindus in the collection of the revenues, because they were most easily compelled by punishment to discover their malpractices; and nothing was to be apprehended from their pusillanimity."

In the letters of Aurangzib drafted by 'Ināyetullah we find the names of some of the Muslim collectors who had embezzled Government revenue, *viz.*, (119*b*) Md. Khalil and Md. Raza (the sons of Husain Khan) ex-faujdārs of Ghorāghāt and Hughli respectively (also 218*b*), (222*b*). Mukarramat Khan) (late diwān). Murshid Quli wrote to the Emperor (220*a*), "The mahals which I had entrusted to certain officers for meeting the pay of the troops. . . have been unsurped (*i. e.*, misappropriated) by them . . . The local officials of Bengal wish to peculate the money assigned for the payment of those whose salary is due from the State",

aristocracy in Bengal, whose position was confirmed and made hereditary by Lord Cornwallis.

Yet another change in the Hindu society of Bengal began with Murshid Quli Khan's coming as permanent diwān, in 1710. Hitherto all the higher offices in the Mughal administration, not only in the army and law, but also in the revenue and accounts departments and even in the supply and secretariat branches of the army and navy in this province, had been filled by men imported from Agra and the Panjab, who did not settle in Bengal, but came and went away with the changing subahdārs. (see, ch. 12, sec. 3, p. 223.) This flow of talent from the west was interrupted and finally stopped when after Shah 'Ālam's death (1712) the central power in Delhi disintegrated through palace-revolutions and an independent provincial dynasty grew up in Bengal, like those of Hyderabad and Lucknow. Under Murshid Quli Khan and the succeeding Nawabs, Bengali Hindus, by the force of their talents and mastery of Persian, came to occupy the highest civil posts under the subahdār and many of the military posts also under the faujdārs. There had been Bengali Hindu diwāns and qānungoes, well versed in the Persian language and in Muslim Court etiquette, as early as the days of Husain Shah (c. 1510). Under Murshid Quli such men grew prosperous enough to found new zamindāri houses. Such ennobled civil servants came from the Brāhman, Vaidya, Kāyastha, and even the confectioner castes—whose progeny are now called Rajas. Under the later Nawabs, more than one Bengali Hindu held the rank of *Rāy-i-Rāyān* (the sanskrit equivalent of Khān-i-Khānān) with the function of the Chancellor of Exchequer. So many Bengalis, of all the above three castes, claim descent from Rāy-i-Rāyāns that these ancestors must have been "chancellors" only to district magistrates, like the local Nawabs of Dacca and Purneā. Kāyasth Ghoshes of Gāvā (Barisal) are called *Dastidārs*, from having once held charge of the lights of the Bengal fleet under the Nawābi. Old official titles like Bakhshi, (pay-master), Sarkār, Qānungo, Shāhna (police prefect), Chākladār, Tarafdār, Munshi, Lashkar, and Khan (!) are still borne by Bengali Hindu families, reminding us of their ancestors' careers in the age of the Nawābs.

Apart from his industrious attention to details and honest control of the finances, Murshid Quli Khan owed his success in enhancing the revenue collection to his practice of draconic severity and bestial torture on the defaulters. Salimullah, only one generation after this Nawāb's death, thus describes his methods :

"On the last day of the month he exacted from the Khālsa, jāgir and other departments, the amount due, to uttermost *dām*.

He put strict *muhasils* (bailiffs) over the *mutasaddis, 'āmils, qānungoes* and other officers, confining them in the *kachari* or in the *diwān khānah* of the Chihil Situn (Hall of Forty Pillars) in Murshidabad, where they were refused food and drink, and not suffered to perform the other necessary calls of nature. To these severities were added the cruelties of Nāzir Āhmad (his *major domo*) ; this man used to suspend the zamindars by the heels and bastinado them with a switch . . . And he also used to have them flogged till they consented to pay the money . . . When Murshid Quli Khan discovered that an 'āmil or zamindār had dissipated the revenue and was unable to make good the deficiency, he compelled the offenders, his wife and children to turn Muhammadans.

"Sayyid Razi Khan (the husband of Murshid Quli's grand-daughter) was appointed deputy diwān of Bengal. This man exercised several new species of severity on the zamindārs and 'āmils who fell in arrears. He ordered a pit to be dug, about the height of a man, which was filled with human excrement in a state of putrefaction . . . The zamindārs or 'āmils who failed in their payments . . . were ducked in this pit . . . Because in the Hindavi language *Vaikunth* signifies Paradise, Sayyid Razi Khan called this infernal pit by that name".

This radical change in the revenue system of Bengal was not effected without opposition. Complaints were made by the dismissed collectors to the Emperor. In one "letter by order" from the imperial Government to the Bengal diwān we read, "The Emperor has learnt from an outside source that you are distributing the parganas of crownland etc. in *ijāra,*—which in the language of that province means farming the revenue to contractors *(māl-zāmini)* and that these contractors are practising all kinds of oppression on the weak and the peasantry, so that the cultivation of the parganas has almost reached the point of desolation, and that if this continues for one year more the peasants would be ruined". ('Ināy, *Āhkām*, 217b). The diwān in reply explained his system of revenue settlement, how "after reaching Dacca he took security-bonds from the contractors of the revenue-collection and fixed the periodical instalments payable by them at the prayer of the cultivators and following the practice of the late diwān Kifāyet Khan". The Emperor gave full authority to the man on the spot, and assured Murshid Quli, "You are diwān with full power for the three provinces and also for the estates of the prince. Act to the satisfaction of the governor and with his advice, in any way that you know to be most advisable, proper, and conducive to economy . . . I have heard that you have administered Orissā better than your

predecessors and succeeded in collecting tribute from the zamindārs. You are highly praised for it". ('Ināy, *Āhkām*, 220a).

Salimullah in his *Tārikh-i-Bangāla* (written about 1763) fully describes how the new system worked:— "In order to make a full investigation of the value of the lands, he placed the principal zamindārs in close confinement, and gave the collection into the hands of expert *'āmils* or collectors . . . He also ordered the whole of the lands to be remeasured; and having ascertained the quantity of fallow and waste ground belonging to every village, he caused a considerable quantity of it to be brought into cultivation; the collectors were authorized to make money advances (*taqavi*) to the poorer husbandmen for purchasing stock and seed-grain. When he had thus entirely dispossessed the zamindārs of all interference in the collection, he assigned to them a subsistence allowance called *nānkar* land, to which was added the privilege of hunting, cutting wood in the forests (*bankar*), and of fishing in the lakes and rivers (*jal-kar*.) After some years, his agents, in order to enhance the collection, resumed to the State the subsistence-lands of the zamindārs and by other kinds of exaction raised the surplus revenue of the province from one kror and thirty lakhs[1] of rupees to one kror and fifty lakhs. On his assumption of the diwāni he had made a careful cadastral survey, by which he gained accurate information about the total areas under the heads cultivated, fallow, and barren, and also prepared a comparative estimate of the past and present (*hast-o-bud*) revenue yield of every rural unit."

Another cause of the revenue increase was his administrative economy, the collection-charges were cut down to the bone (which meant in actual effect the still greater squeezing of the peasantry) and the force that preserved internal peace over this vast province was reduced to 2,000 horsemen and 4000 infantry only. This sufficed for the purpose, while he lived and his name held a fretful realm in awe, but brought in chaos when the country's sleep was broken by rebellion or invasion.

The year 1717 marks a turning point not only in the career of Murshid Quli Khan, but also in the history of Bengal. He was

[1] This was the theoretical or standard total of the revenue (*jama' kāmil*) of Bengal as we find in the official manuals of the empire, called *Dastur-ul-aml*. But in January 1715 Murshid Quli was informed by his head assistant (peshkār) that the revenue of the subah was one kror and two lakhs of rupees; out of which 74 lakhs came from the Crownlands, 18 lakhs from the jāgir of Mir Jumla (the nominal subahdār), and the balance was the income of the jāgirs of the mansabdārs and the fleet or nawwāra. (*Ākhbārāt*.)

In the above is two lakhs (*du*) a copyist's error for thirty lakhs (*si*) ? [J. S.]

now at last firmly in the saddle as the supreme and *sole* authority in Bengal. The fainéant Emperors in far-off Delhi were too much entangled in palace intrigues and revolutions to have the power, even if they had the wish, to actively interfere in the administration of Bengal; they left everything to the subahdār so long as the annual surplus revenue of the province (one kror and some lakhs of rupees) was regularly paid to them.

Hence, Bengal was at last freed from the double set of leeches who had been " sucking the people ",[1] one the temporary governor bent solely upon making his own pile before being transferred from Bengal, and the other the diwān loyally trying to collect the revenue to the last pice. The gross fiscal tyranny and illegal exaction of which the French merchants at Chandernagar complain so often in their letters during 'Ainuddin's governorship (1700-1706) and which " made the province depopulated, silver scarce, and trade difficult (as they wrote), were now placed under check, because there was only one master to be satisfied. Murshid Quli as subahdār demanded only the standard revenue. In realising the State demand under this head, he was severe and even barbarous in his methods of cruelty, but he collected only the regular or legitimate amount of revenue but tormented only those contractors who had defaulted,— not every " farmer of the revenue ". And he forbade all the illegal cesses or extra-revenue exactions and trade monopolies practised by his predecessors for three generations before. His own annual surplus accumulations were modest sums, not comparable to Shāista Khan's nine krores in 18 years, Khan Jahān Bahādur Khan's two krores in one year, or Prince 'Azim's eight krores in 9 years. Moreover, this saving was effected by Murshid Quli's economy in administrative expenditure, his personal abstention from every kind of luxury and pomp, and not by squeezing the rich by illegal exaction. Thus, under his rule as well as Alivardi's (1716-1756), the Bengal people gained a breathing time and a chance of prosperity.

It must also be borne in mind in mitigation of our censure of Murshid Quli's severity that the internal peace which he sternly enforced on the country increased the people's tax-paying power and therefore a larger revenue in his last ten years did not necessarily mean any increased extortion.

[1] French merchants at Hugli to the Compagnie in Paris, 18 Dec. 1701,— "Le Sultan Azim-ud-din et le divan.—ne reculant devant aucun moyen pour 'sucer les peuples' ". Kaep. 524.

VI. Zamindārs of Bengal

In his final revenue settlement, Murshid Quli divided the entire land of Bengal into 13 circles (*chāklas*) which were subdivided into thirteen tracts under collection by jāgirdārs and twenty-five areas reserved as *Khālsa* (Crownland) farmed out to contractors. We have seen how Islām Khan Chishti and his immediate successors had made the Rajshahi and Pabna districts (covering north and central Bengal) into regular fiscal units of the Mughal administration; so, too, in Murshid Quli Khan's time, Mymensingh and Ālapsingh in the northeast and Jessore-Khulna in the exrteme south became regularly revenue-paying areas under the Crown.

Among the new zamindārs created by Murshid Quli the most fortunate was Raghunandan, a Brahman of the Vārendra section, who had been brought up in the house of another Vārendra Brahman the Raja of Puthiā (in the Rajshahi district), but after coming to Murshidabad to seek his fortune got a small post in the revenue department. Here he showed such intelligence, industry, suppleness and skill in intrigue that he rose with phenomenal rapidity, till at last he became Murshid Quli's most trusted counsellor in revenue matters. He used this position to get many landed estates transferred to his brother Rāmjivan, especially the Bhushnā pargana after the fall of Sitārām (1714). Thus was founded the Nātor rāj, which rivalled the Bardwān rāj for the premier position among the Bengal zamindārs in the last days of the Nawābi, but has been woefully shorn of most of its limbs since then through folly and sloth. The ablest servant of Raghunandan was Dayārām Rāy (of the *tili* caste), who acted for his chief in the overthrow of Sitārām, and enriched himself in the sack of that Raja's capital. He was the founder of the Dighāpatiyā rāj (Rajshahi district). Another officer of Nātor got the pickings when the Nātor zamindāri broke up under the incompetent successor of Rāni Bhawāni, and he founded the Narāil rāj (Dakhin Rārhi Kāyasth caste).

Two zamindār houses of older origin than Nātor still remain in Rajshahi, but now in a very shrunken condition. They are both of the same Vārendra Brāhman caste, and hold (1) Tāhirpur, which once claimed to be among the Twelve Bhuiyās, and (2) Puthiā. Two more Vārendra Brāhman families owe their elevation to aristocratic rank to Murshid Quli Khan. Srikrishna (title *Hāldār*, short for *Hāvladār*) whose ancestor had gained the zamindāri of Karoi (in Taraf, Rājshāhi, now included in Bogra district), and took lease of the Selbarsh pargana (c. 1710-15). As a qānungo he gained notable success in suppressing refractory zamindārs and collecting the Government revenue in full, and was rewarded with the

title of Talāpātra and made Chaudhuri of Mymensingh (c. 1718), pargana Mominshāhi. That district was then in a primitive wild condition, with no roads, no civilised population, no industry except a rude form of husbandry and cattle-raising. The people were mostly half savage Mongoloid tribesmen. But Srikrishna proved an improving landlord; he developed his estate by settling on it many Brāhman and Kāyastha families from western Bengal by grants of land and thus supplied teachers, priests and civilised administrators to that wilderness. He cleared the jungle, dug canals, raised embankments, planted agricultural colonies in the vast untilled areas, and set up local marts for the produce. Thus the yield of the pargana greatly increased. Srikrishna's eldest son Chānd Rāy was placed by Alivardi Khan at the head of his Khālsa department; and he secured for his father the Zafar Shāhi pargana, west of the Brahmaputra (in the Ghorāghāt chākla),—which was similarly developed by the same active and enlightened owner. His endowments of land to Muslim saints and mosques, as well as to Hindu temples and priests, were wisely designed to elevate the intellectual and religious life of the people. (Died *c.* 1758.) The founder of the Muktāgāchā family (now known as the Maharajas of Mymensingh) was Srikrishna Āchārya Chaudhury, another revenue-official of the Nawāb and of the same Vārendra Brāhman caste, He secured the Ālapsingh pargana.

Of the great or old historical zamindāris that survived up to Murshid Quli's time, two were preserved by him, namely Birbhum (under Āsadullah Khan, who was universally respected for his high character and acts of piety) and Bishnupur (under the Malla Hāmbir Rājas, whose country was too full of hills and jungles and too poor in natural resources to be a profitable conquest). But Uday Nārāyan, the last descendant of the ancient lords of greater Rajshahi (about three times the area of the present Rajshahi district) died in this Nawāb's time and his estates were parcelled out to new men.

As distinct from zamindārs, three ruling houses were made to pay regular tribute to the Bengal subahdār:

(1) Kuch Bihār, which by the treaty of 1711 ceded the three chāklas of Fathpur, Qāzirhāt and Kānkinā, besides Bodā Pātgrām and Purbabhāg, while tribute was promised for some former Kuch areas in the modern Rangpur district.

(2) Tipperah, whose Raja used formerly to menace Mughal Sylhet, now became submissive. And so also (3) the hill Raja of Jaintiā. Early in his career in Bengal, Murshid Quli had suppressed rebels in Chandrakonā (evidently the remnant of Rahim Afghan's partisans) and in Morang (through Purnia).

But one among the zamindārs crushed by Murshid Quli Khan deserves our notice because his meteoric rise and fall has placed him by the side of Pratāpāditya as the foremost tragic figures in the history and popular tradition of this province. Sitārām Rāy of Bhushnā, an Uttar Rārhi Kāyastha, and the son of the Hindu collector under the Muslim faujdār of Bhushnā (16 miles east of Māgurā in the Khulnā district), took a lease of the Naldi pargana (modern Narāil) from the Bengal subahdār, promising to pay the revenue regularly and to suppress the rebel Afghans and bandit gangs of that tract (*c.* 1686.) His strong and able rule greatly increased his wealth and power and he formed the nucleus of a kingdom, which grew up as he added more parganas by farming their revenue from the Bengal governor. Many adventurers were attracted by his fame as a successful leader and good paymaster and he formed a fairly strong army under some very devoted and heroic lieutenants. At the same time he kept the governor at Dacca satisfied through his tactful Court-agent, occasionally paying some money and reporting his suppression of robbers and rebels. He is even said to have secured an imperial farman and the title of Raja by paying tribute to the Emperor of Delhi. To keep up his new dignity he founded a capital at the village of Bāgjāni (10 miles from Bhushnā) and named it Muhammadpur (in honour of a Muslim saint.) This place he fortified by means of long earthen embankments and a fosse, while vast marshes kept invasion out on two sides, and the river Madhumati formed a natural barrier on the east side. Here he built many temples, palaces, offices and store-rooms and stables and dug tanks of fresh water. In pride of power, he humbled and robbed the smaller zamindārs of the country round and stopped sending any revenue to the subahdārs. His success was made easier by the supine rule of Ibrāhim Khan (1689-1697) and the friction between Murshid Quli and 'Azim-ush-shān, which lasted till 1710. At last in 1713 when he killed Sayyid Ābu Turāb, the faujdār of Hugli, Murshid Quli could no longer overlook his audacity. A strong force was detached under Murshid Quli's relative Bakhsh 'Ali Khan (newly appointed faujdār of Bhushnā); and with the help of all the neighbouring zamindārs' levies, Sitārām was overwhelmed and captured with his family, and his capital was sacked (Feb-March 1714). Thus fell the last Hindu kingdom in Bengal.

Sitārām's kingdom, which once covered about one-half of south Bengal, has vanished. His palaces have crumbled into unshapely mounds of earth and brick completely hidden under dense jungle; mud and weeds have choked up his lakes; and his family has been scattered to the four quarters; even the gods he worshipped have

deserted the fine temples he built for them. But the genius of the greatest Bengali novelist has invested the name of Sitārām Ray with a halo of romance, which will cause it to be remembered as long as the Bengali tongue continues to be spoken on earth.

VII. Economic effect of Murshid Quli's administration; His character

Aurangzib's letters to 'Azim show that the Bengal surplus revenue was despatched to the imperial camp in coins, loaded in carts, as bills of exchange could not be obtained for such vast sums and the rate of discount also was high ('Ināyet, *Āhkām,* 118*b*). This unceasing drain of silver from Bengal, amounting on an average to one kror of rupees very year, kept the volume of true money in circulation here extremely small and the price of local produce very low. (Kaeppelin, 462 and 524, French reports from Chandernagar). Hence, it is no wonder that while Sebastien Manrique about 1632 found rice selling at Murshidabad at four to five maunds a rupee, ninety years later, in Murshid Quli's time, the 'price of rice there was still commonly four maunds". (Salimullah.) This fact proves that the circulating medium had not increased in a century's time, in spite of the growth of production and trade. The common people had no economic staying power, no capital, because they could not accumulate any true money or silver coins as savings, though the area under tillage had increased. Was this condition of the people a proof of Murshid Quli's beneficence or of his want of true statesmanship?

The land revenue was forced up so high only by the heartless squeezing of the peasantry and inhuman torture of the contractor collectors. The pressure applied by the Nawāb at the top naturally passed through the intermediate grades finally on to the actual cultivators, who were left with the bare means of existence, but every portion of the annual increase of the fields and looms above that minimum was taken away by the State. Thus, while the luxury of Delhi and Murshidabad was pampered, and Murshid Quli every year buried a new hoard in his treasure-vaults (Salimullah, tr. p. 48), the mass of the people browsed and died like human sheep. The gold, pearls and gems piled up in the Treasure Chamber of the Murshidabad palace, which dazzled the eyes of Colonel Clive[1] when

[1] Clive told the Select Committee of Parliament, "Consider the situation in which the victory of Plassey placed me. A great prince was dependent on my pleasure; an opulent city lay at my mercy; I walked through vaults which were

he entered the Nawāb's capital after his victory at Plassey, did not enrich Bengal itself in any way. This fact only illustrates the truth:

pauvres paysans, pauvre royaume;
pauvre royaume, pauvre roi.

The whole of this surplus national stock for sixty years was whisked away to Britain in the days of Mir Ja'far and Mir Qāsim, and a generation later the gilded pauper in the Murshidabad palace had to beg the Calcutta Government for relief from insolvency. That was the net gain of the Bengal people from Murshid Quli Khan's and Alivardi's rule.

There was money in the hands of some people, but only under the protective wings of the European traders in Calcutta and Chinsura, and to a lesser extent in the neighbouring cosmopolitan town of Hugli. The Surman embassy to the Court of Farrukh Siyar (C. R. Wilson, ii. pt. 2.) brought back from Delhi in 1717 a patent of rights (esp. that of unhampered trade on payment of one fixed sum as duty.) This gave a great impetus to the growth of Calcutta, though the English were long baulked of the permission to buy 38 villages south of that city, through the Nawāb's jealousy and fear. " Besides a number of English private merchants licensed by the Company, Calcutta was in a short time peopled by Portuguese, Armenian, Mughal (*i. e.*, Persian), and Hindu merchants, who carried on their commerce under the protection of the English flag: thus the shipping belonging to the port in the course of ten years after the embassy, amounted to ten thousand tons, and many individuals amassed fortunes, without injuring the Company's trade, or incurring the displeasure of the Mughal Government . . . The inhabitants of Calcutta enjoyed, after the return of the embassy, a degree of freedom and security unknown to the other subjects of the Mughal empire; and that city, in consequence, increased yearly, in extent, beauty, and riches ". (Stewart). Salimullah confirms this description :—

" The mild and equitable conduct of the English in their settlement, gained them the confidence and esteem of the natives; which joined to the consideration of the privileges and immunities which the Company enjoyed, induced numbers to remove thither with their families; so that in a short time Calcutta became an extensive and populous city ".

Calcutta, after it had been made the seat of a Presidency (independent of Madras) in 1700, began to grow in importance and

thrown open to me alone, piled on either hand with gold and jewels! Mr. Chairman, this moment I stand astonished at my own moderation ".—He took only 40 lakhs of rupees, at a time when it required four maunds of rice to buy one rupee.

wealth, and by the year 1750 its population was estimated at over one lakh as compared with the 15,000 of 1704.

"Ja'far Khan being sensible that the prosperity of Bengal depended upon its advantageous commerce, showed great indulgence to merchants of every description, but was, however, rather partial to the Mughals (*i. e.*, Persians). The encouragement which was given to trade by him, who directed that nothing but the established rate of duties should be exacted, soon made the port of Hugli a place of great importance. Many wealthy merchants who resided there had ships of their own, on which they traded to Arabia, Persia and other countries". (Salimullah).

In fact, Hugli became a Shi'a colony and a centre of Shi'a theology and Persian culture, before the full growth of Murshidabad. And even afterwards, this cosmopolitan port was preferred to the political capital as a residence, by those Persian emigrés who had no employment or family ties to keep them at Murshidabad. Not only Shi'a teachers, but many Persian physicians and perfumers settled at Hugli, attracted by the large number of rich patrons in that town and in its neighbouring district, because the Arabic medical science was then in high favour all over the east. The stream of migration from Persia to India (especially to Bengal which had a Shi'a dynasty on the throne) was greatly increased from the beginning of the 18th century during the Afghan domination over the Safavi Shahs, Nādir Shah's reign, and the confusion following the assassination of Nādir (1747). The historian Ābul Hasan Gulistāni (the author of *Mujmil-ut-Tārīkh b'ad āz Nādiriya*) was among these gifted refugees (arrived in 1756), while his uncle had migrated to Bengal some years earlier.

By this time the Dutch had yielded the pride of place in Bengal to the English. In 1653 they had obtained a firm footing at Chinsurā, with sub-factories at Qāsimbāzār and Pātnā. These were the centres of an exceedingly prosperous and profitable trade; their export of opium to Java and China brought them enormous profits. "Something like 50 p. c. profit was regularly made on the Dutch Company's turnover in the seventies of the 18th century, very largely owing to the enormously profitable trade of Surat, Bengal, and Ceylon". (*Camb. Hist. of India,* V. 57.)

The French East India Company was in a state of woeful decline from 1700 till 1740, after which Dumas and Dupleix set about improving their trade in Bengal. The causes were the War of Spanish Succession and other entanglements in Europe, the rotten state of the Bourbon administration, the extreme poverty of the Company, and the selfishness and quarrels of their agents in India.

On the 9th January 1722 (New style), however, they secured a *farmān* placing them on the same footing as the Dutch. The *parwāna* issued by Ja'far Khan Nasiri, in conformity with the *farmān*, runs thus:

"The French Company having been obliged to suspend its commerce and the despatch of its ships to India during certain years because of war, . . . M. D'Ardan-court, Director of the Company, has come to reestablish the commerce. As the Dutch obtained from the Emperor Farrukh Siyar a *farmān* reducing the duty to 2½ p. c., M. D' Ardan-court has sent his wakil to us, praying that he may be granted a parwāna stamed with our seal, in which the duty of 3½ p. c. would be reduced to 2½ p. c., on the same footing as the Dutch. For this he promises to pay Rs 40,000 to the Emperor and Rs 10,000 to the Nawāb of Bengal. Having received the said Rs 10,000 we have given him the present parwana. Let none demand more than 2½ p. c. duty, nor stop their boats and merchandise . ." (*Lettres et Conventions*, ed. Martineau, p. 19.)

We shall conclude this section with an account of another European Company, through it had a very short life. The Ostend Company, formed in Austrian Netherlands, received a charter from their Emperor in 1723, but in 1727 diplomatic pressure by rival European Powers, forced the Austrian monarch to suspend its privileges for seven years. Its chief settlement in India, at Bānkibāzār, three miles north of Barrackpur, hoisted the Austrian flag and continued to trade under its protection. (Hence it was called the German Company.) But in 1744 the faujdār of Hugli (instigated by the English and the Dutch traders) besieged Bānkibāzār, the small garrison fought well, and at last its handful of survivors evacuated the place and sailed away in their ship, taking to a life of piracy in the Indian waters. (*Cambridge Hist. of India*, V. 115).

Murshid Quli Khan's reputation stands very high among members of his own sect. Salimullah rises to the level of an Abul Fazl in extolling him. He writes :—

"Since the time of Shāista Khan there had not appeared in any part of Hindustan an āmir who could be compared with Ja'far Khan for zeal in the propagation of the faith; for wisdom in the establishment of laws and regulations; for munificence and liberality in the encouragement and support given to men of family and eminence; for rigid and impartial justice in redressing wrongs and punishing offenders. His judicial decisions were rational and proper. . .

"From breakfast to noon he employed himself in copying the

Qurān, He maintained above 2000 readers, beadsmen and chanters, who were constantly employed in reading the *Qurān* and in other acts of devotion. He always provided against famine and severely prohibited all monopolies of grain, and also the exportation of grain.

"He despised all kinds of luxury, and particularly in dress and food. He possessed very extensive learning, and paid great respect to men who were eminent for their piety or erudition. During his government, the meanest peasant was secured from injustice and oppression . . . Two days in the week he administered justice in person; and was so impartial in his decisions, and rigid in the execution thereof, that no one dared to commit oppression."

To this the author of the *Riyāz-us-Salātin,* writing 25 years after Salimullah, adds (283) :—

"Never in his life did he take any consort except his one married wife. Such was his delicacy of feeling that he did not admit into his harem any eunuch or any woman who was not of known character and trustworthiness, (*nā-maharam*) ".

A puritan in his private life, strictly attentive to his public duties as he understood them, gravely decorous and rigidly orthodox as befitted a favourite disciple of Aurangzib, and a propagator of his faith as ordained in his scriptures, Murshid Quli Khan presents one side of his character in a brilliant light. But his heart was cold and his sympathies narrow; his calculating vindictiveness, his religious bigotry, and his utter lack of warm all-embracing benevolence denied this conscientious civil servant the right to be ranked as a statesman or even as a truly great soul. (See Stewart, sec. VII.)

CHAPTER XXII

SHUJĀ-UD-DIN MUHAMMAD KHĀN

I. Early career and rise of Shujā-ud-din

Murshid Quli Khān died without any male issue on the 30th June, 1727, when his son-in-law Shujā'-ud-din Muhammad Khan (surnamed Shujā'-ud-daullah, Āsad Jung) succeeded him to the government of the two provinces of Bengal and Orissā. Shujā'-ud-din was an Afshar Turk by descent. One of his ancestors named 'Ali Yār Sultān was governor of Farah, a province of Khurāsān, when Tahmasp was ruler of Persia, and his father held an important post at Burhānpur under the Mughal government.[1] It was at Burhānpur, to which place Murshid Quli Ja'far also originally belonged, that Shujā'-ud-din came into close contact with him. He married the latter's daughter, Zinat-un-nisā, and had a son through her, named Sarfarāz.

On the appointment of Murshid Quli as the Diwān and Nāzim of Bengal and Orissā, his son-in-law, Shujā'-ud-din, was made the Deputy Governor of Orissa. But the relation between them soon ceased to be cordial. This was due not only to their differences in temperament but also to the dissatisfaction of Zinat-un-nisā, a lady of pious disposition, with her husband for his profligate habits.[2] Thus when Murshid Quli felt that his end was drawing near, he tried earnestly to obtain imperial consent to the succession of his grandson, Sarfarāz, to the government of Bengal and Orissā. Sarfarāz had been already declared *diwān* of Bengal by Emperor Farrukhsiyar, at the request of his grandfather, who had also purchased for him, out of the income of his personal *jāgīr*, the *zamindāri* of *Qismat* Chunākhāli in *parganā* Kulharia in the Murshidābād district.

But Shujā'-ud-din naturally coveted the government of Bengal. On the advice of the two brothers, Hāji Ahmad and 'Alivardi, he took all possible measures for gaining timely information of what happened at Murshidābād and also tried his best to obtain support for his cause at the imperial Court. On hearing from a reliable source that Murshid Quli's days were numbered, he at once marched from

[1] Walsh, *History of Murshidabad*, 138.
[2] *Siyar*, Eng. tr., i. 273—'5, 254.

Orissā for Bengal with a large army, leaving his son, Muhammad Taqi Khān (born of a wife different from the daughter of Murshid Quli), in charge of the government of the former province. On the way he heard of Murshid Quli's demise, and, arriving in the vicinity of Midnapur, received the imperial patent appointing him to the government of Bengal, which had been secured for him through the influence of Samsām-ud-daulah Khān-i-Daurān, a prominent noble of the Delhi Court then in the highest confidence of the Emperor. After halting at that place for a while and naming it *Mubārak-Manzil* (the auspicious halting place), he marched expeditiously towards Murshidabad and reached there within a few days. He entered straight into the *Chihil Satun* (the palace of forty pillars raised by Murshid Quli) and formally proclaimed his accession to the *masnad* of Bengal. His son, Sarfarāz, taken unawares at this turn of events, was persuaded by his friends and relatives, chiefly his grand-mother, to relinquish the idea of opposing his father any more. He quietly submitted to him and retired to his private residence at Nuktākhāli.

II. Early measures of Shujā'-ud-din's government

Shujā'-ud-din distributed the principal offices of the government among his kinsmen and friends. His son, Sarfarāz, was retained as the nominal *diwān* of Bengal; his second son, Muhammad Taqi Khān, was appointed Deputy Governor of Orissā; and his son in-law, Murshid Quli II, was made Deputy Governor of Jahāngirnagar (Dacca). 'Alivardi and his three nephews were elevated to high posts. Ālamchānd, previously Shujā'-ud-din's *diwān* in the Orissa government, was now appointed *diwān* of the *Khalsā* at Murshidābād and received from the imperial court a personal *mansab* of 1000 with the title of *Rāy-i-rāyān*, which had not been conferred so long on any officer of the Bengal government. In the administration of all important matters of State, Shujā'-ud-din was guided by the counsel of 'Alivardi and his brother, Hāji Āhmad, who had rendered him valuable services since their first acquaintance with him in Orissā, of Rāy-i-rāyān Ālamchānd, an able financier and devoted officer, and of Jagat Seth Fatehchānd, the famous banker of Murshidābād, who being the owner of vast riches naturally exerted profound influence over the Bengal Nawābs. As a matter of fact, the Seths of Murshidābād henceforth played an important part in the history of Bengal and were active participators in the mid-eighteenth century political revolutions in the province.

Shujā'-ud-din took also other necessary steps to stengthen his

newly acquired position. He tried to undo the wrongs of the previous regime and adopted a conciliatory attitude towards the zamindārs. After having carefully investigated into the conduct of Nāzir Āhmad and Murād Farrāsh, the two oppresive agents of Murshid Quli Ja'far Khān, he found them guilty of highhandedness, confiscated their properties, and condemned them to death. Of the zamindārs, who had been kept in confinement since the time of his prodecessor, he immediately released those whom he found to be guiltless The rest, who had been actually defaulters in the payment of revenue, were made to execute written bonds promising to be thenceforth obedient to the Nawāb's government and punctual in remitting its dues through the Banking Agency of Jagat Seth Fatehchand. They were allowed to return to this respective homes after being presented with costly khilāts. He realised *nazars* from them worth one kror and fifty lakhs of rupees, and sent the amount to the Emperor's treasury at Delhi through the Banking Agency of Fatehchānd. He conciliated the Emperor, further by occasionally sending him various presents in elephants, horses and fine Bengal cloths and by the timely remittance of the imperial tribute due from the Bengal government. The Emperor rewarded him with the title of Mutāman-ul-mulk Shujā'-ud-daulah Āsad Jang.

In the early part of his regime, Shujā'-ud-din by being properly attentive to the affairs of his government and solicitous for the welfare of his subjects, " evinced to the world that he was deserving of his good fortune". He was kind and bountiful towards his officers, civil and military, benevolent and hospitable towards those who happened to visit Murshidābād, and extended his charity to his old friends. A God-fearing man, he had a scrupulous regard for justice and dispensed it impartially. Ghulām Husain, the author of the *Siyar*, observes that " the poorest suitor was sure of being in his presence upon a footing with his very son; and the fearful sparrow, certain of finding in his bosom a shelter against the hawk, fled towards him with a perfect reliance on his goodness. People acquainted with history thought they lived in Naushirvān's reign ". (Trans. 1. 325.) He was respectful and generous towards men of learning and piety. In fact, peace and prosperity then prevailed in Bengal as the result of his wise and beneficial measures.

Fond of pomp and splendour, Shujā'-ud-din considered the buildings erected in the time of his predecessor, unsuitable for State-offices. So having demolished these, he caused some magnificent edifices to be constructed at Murshidābād, such as a Palace, an Arsenal, a high gateway, Revenue-court (*diwān-khānā*), a Public Audience-Hall, a Private chamber (*khilwat khānā*), a

Farmān-bāri, and a Court of Exchequer (*Khālsā-Kāchāri.*) In the village of Dāhāpārā, on the west bank of the river Bhāgirathi, Nāzir Āhmad, an agent of Murshid Quli Ja'far Khān, had left unfinished the building of a mosque in the compound of an extensive garden. After his execution, Shujā'-ud-din completed the mosque in a superb style, and laid out the garden most beautifully with a large reservoir of water, running canals, artificial springs, flower-beds and fruit-trees. He gave the garden the name of *Farahbāgh* or the Garden of Joy. The strength of the army was raised by him to 250,000 men, consisting of equal numbers of cavalry and infantry.

But some failings in Shujā'-ud-din's private character soon got the better of his prudence. Though advanced in years, he could not control his passions and became gradually addicted to luxury and profligacy. As a natural effect of this he became more and more neglectful of the affairs of the State, the management of which consequently passed entirely into the hands of Hāji Āhmad, Ālamchānd, and Jagat Seth Fatehchānd. This body of advisers, acting without any restraint from the supreme authority, soon degenerated into a clique of self-seekers, eager to serve their own interests even by fomenting intrigues and conspiracies which began to eat into the vitals of the Bengal government and made the downfall of the Nawabship only a question of time. The authors of *Riyāz* as well as *Tārikh-i-Bangālah* state how these men caused a temporary estrangement of feeling between Shujā'-ud-din and Sarfarāz and brought about an open rupture between Sarfarāz and Muhammad Taqi Khān, when the latter come to see his father at Murshidābād. The two brothers were prevented from resorting to arms only by the intervention of the Nawāb and Sarfarāz's mother. Muhammad Taqi Khān was permitted to return to Orissā, but died there in 1734 A. D.

III. Divisions of the Bengal Subah and their Administration

Shujā'-ud-din's deputy-governors did their best to secure the obedience of the recalcitrant zamindārs and chiefs to the authority of the Nawāb's government. Bihār was added to the Bengal Subah by Emperor Muhammad Shah about 1733 A. D. Thus Shujā'-ud-din became the *subahdār* of the three provinces of Bengal, Bihār and Orissā, for the administration of which he created four divisions. The central division comprised Western, Central and a portion of Northern Bengal; another, that is, the Dacca division, of Eastern and Southern Bengal, a small portion of Northern Bengal, Sylhet

and Chittagong; the third was the Bihār division, and the fourth the Orissā division. The first division was directly administered by the Nawāb through his Council of Advisers, and each of the other divisions was placed under a *Nāib Nāzim* or Deputy Governor, subject to the general control of the *subahdār*. Bihār was efficiently governed by its newly appointed *nāib nāzim*, 'Alivardi. The government of Jahāngirnagar or Dacca had been entrusted by the late Nawāb, Murshid Quli Ja'far Khān, to Shujā'-ud-din's son-in-law, Murshid Quli II, who possessed a fine taste for poetical composition and calligraphy. Murshid Quli II (poetically surnamed *Makhmur*) received considerable assistance in his administration from his able and faithful deputy (*nāib*), Mir Habib.[1] By carefully attending to minute details and enforcing strict economy, Mir Habib reduced the expenses of the state flotilla (*nawāra*), artillery and military departments. He enriched his master as well as himself by reviving the practice of granting monopolies in certain articles of trade, and is said to have seized the wealth of Nurullah, zamindār of *parganā* Jālālpur[2], after treacherously assassinating him.

Mir Habib also led an incursion into the kingdom of Tipperah in alliance with Āqā Sādiq, zamindār of Patpasār. Fortunately for himself he was also able to secure the friendship of the discontented nephew of the Rājah of Tipperah, who had been expelled by his uncle outside the kingdom. Prompted by feelings of revenge, the youth guided Mir Habib's troops by the proper route so that they advanced suddenly into the heart of the kingdom near its capital. Absolutely unprepared for such an attack, the Rājah fled to the neighbouring hills, whereupon the fort of Chandigarh, which had been his residence, was stormed by the invaders and the whole of his kingdom fell under the latter's control. It was given to the Rājah's nephew; Āqā Sādiq was appointed its *faujdār*; and Mir Habib went back to Dacca with a rich booty and many elephants. When Murshid Quli II informed Shujā'-ud-din of the conquest of Tipperah and sent him a large share of the plunder, the latter changed its name to Raushanābād, procured for his deputy the title of Bahādur and elevated Mir Habib to the peerage.

On the transfer of Murshid Quli II to Orissā after the death of Muhammad Taqi Khān, the deputy governorship of Dacca was formally conferred on Sarfarāz Khān. Sarfarāz did not personally

[1] For details about Mir Habib's early career, vide Yusuf, f. 33 and *RS* (transl), 290.

[2] Within the area of *Sarkār* Fathabād (*Ain*, trans, II, 132-33) and now situated in the Brāhmanbariā subdivision of the Tipperah district.

go to the seat of his government, but sent there, as his deputy, Sayyid Ghālib 'Ali Khān. Jaswant Rāy, formerly a *munshi* in the government of Murshid Quli Ja'far Khān and guardian-tutor of Sarfarāz, was appointed his *diwān*; and Murād Khān, a son of Nafisā Begam, an uterine sister of Sarfarāz, was made the superintendent (*dārogha*) of the flotilla (*nawāra*). Trained in the art of government under Murshid Quli Ja'far Khān, Jaswant Rāy, by the steady and conscientious discharge of his duties, succeeded in contributing to the peace and prosperity of the people of Dacca as well as in securing an increased revenue for the state. The various monopolies, introduced by Mir Habib, and the duties upon grain, were abolished. The prices of articles became consequently as low as in the days of Shāistā Khān, that is, 8 mounds of rice per rupee, and the western gate of the city of Dacca, which had been closed by Shāistā Khān with the injunction that no governor should open it till he had reduced the price of grain to that level, was now reopened for the first time.

But this happy state of things was not destined to continue long. Through the influence of Nafisā Begam, her son Murād 'Ali Khān, married subsequently to Sarfarāz's daughter, was promoted to the office of Deputy-Governor of Dacca in supersesion of Ghālib 'Ali Khān. Murād 'Ali promoted Rājballabh, a Vaidya by caste and so long a clerk in the Admiralty department, to the post of his *peshkār*. These were indeed unfortunate changes, as the new Deputy-Governor, devoid of tact and the softer feelings, proved to be so oppressive that the *chakla* of Dacca was soon reduced to poverty and desolation, and Jaswant Rāy resigned his office in disgust. Similarly, Mirzā Sayyid Āhmad, the second son of Hāji Āhmad and *nāib faujdār* of Ghorāghāt and Rangpur on behalf of Sarfarāz Khan, "desolated those five districts by his oppression". Strengthened by a body of troops, lent to him by the Nawāb, he reduced to submission the *Rājahs* of Dinājpur and Kuch Vihār, who had so long evaded obedience to the Nawāb's government, and seized their enormous wealth.

Bad'i-uz-Zamān, the Afghān zamindār of Birbhum, had also to feel the weight of the Nawāb's authority. Emboldened by the natural defences of hillocks and jungles surrounding his territory, the Birbhum zamindār had ceased to send to the Nawāb the revenue of 1,400,000 *bighās* of cultivated lands and rose in insurrection against him in 1736 A. D.[1] Sarfarāz under orders of

[1] *Inshā-i-Gharib*,—a collection of Persian letters compiled in 1738 A. D. and discovered at Patna. For further details about it vide *Hindusthan Review*, November 1938.

the Nawab sent a large army into Birbhum under the command of Mir Sharf-ud-din, the second Paymaster-General, and Khwāja Basant, a eunuch of his seraglio. 'Alivardi, the *nāib nāzim* of Bihār, also marched from Patna against that zamindār at the head of a large force. Bad'i-uz-Zamān readily tendered his submission, and accompanied the Bengal troops to Murshidābād to show his respect to Sarfarāz and the Nawāb. 'Alivardi soon returned to Patna. Through the intercession of Mir Sharf-ud-din, Badi'-us-Zamān was granted an interview by Shujā'-ud-din, who pardoned his offences and permitted him to return to Birbhum on his promising an annual remittance of three lakhs of rupees to the Nawāb, besides the standard revenue due from him and also proper obedience to his orders.

Orissā flourished under its new Deputy Governor, Murshid Quli Khān II. He received much valuable assistance from his deputy, Mir Habib, who had accompanied him there from Dacca. The local zamindārs were tactfully brought under control, and the financial condition of the government was improved, partly by curtailment of unnecessary expenses and partly by the introduction of more efficient arrangements for the realisation of revenue. During the administration of Muhammad Taqi Khan, Rāmchandra Deva II[1] of Khurdāh had removed the idol of Jagannāth from Puri to a place situated beyond the Chilkā Lake, which deprived the government of revenue amounting to nine lakhs of rupees a year, collected from the pilgrims. But Murshid Quli II conciliated him and brought back the idol to Puri, the restoration of whose worship stopped a source of heavy financial loss to the Orissā government.

IV. THE EUROPEAN TRADING COMPANIES AND THE BENGAL GOVERNMENT

The English, the French and the Dutch were then the chief European trading nations in Bengal, besides a number of minor European traders of diverse nationalities like Austrian, Polish, Portuguese, Danish and Swedish[2]. The trade of the first three was, on the whole, flourishing in spite of occasional disturbances. Thus the Council in Calcutta wrote to the Court of Directors in England on the 16th January, 1733: "Have a prospect of despatching the

[1] According to Stirling, Rājah Ramchandra Deva II ruled from 1727 to 1743 (*Asiatick Researches*, Vol. XV, 294) but according to Hunter from 1725 to 1736 (*History of Orissa*, Vol. II, Appendix, 190).

[2] Letter to Court, 26th December, 1733, paras 27-29; Ibid, 29 January, 1736.

ships in good Time notwithstanding there has been a greater Demand for Goods this year than ever was known, the French sending home five ships directly for Europe". The English maintained strict control over their *dālāls* (brokers) and merchants, took all possible care to stop the abuse of *dastaks* so that everybody having a *dastak* had to sign a "Note that the goods are for his own account" as well as to prevent "any private traders interfering with the Company's trade", and sometimes co-operated with the French and the Dutch "in all Legal Measures to prevent Interlopers from Trading". They had often to meet with difficulties due to currency-troubles, particularly when the Nawāb's government prohibited the circulation of Madras and Arcot Rupees in Bengal or permitted it at a high rate of *batta* (discount)[1]. The Council in Calcutta wrote to the Court of Directors on the 29th January, 1738: "Strenuously solicited for the currency of Madras Rupees, but it could not be granted, the duty on foreign rupees being ordered from Court to make up the deficiency in Mint Revenues". To obviate this inconvenience, the English borrowed coins from Fatehchānd, the leading banker of Bengal, in exchange for bullion, which the latter liked to have because of his control over the mint at Murshidābād. The selfish conduct of some of their own officers (as for example of Mr. Barker at Qāsimbāzār), and the attempts of some of their *dālāls* and *baniāns* to bargain as much as they could, occasionally put the English to great inconvenience. But they always adopted a strict attitude in such cases.

The English as well as the Dutch soon became very jealous of the gradual improvement of the trade of the Ostend Company, which had been permitted by Murshid Quli Ja'far Khān to establish a factory at Bānkibāzār, situated on the eastern side of the Hugli river at a distance of fifteen miles above Calcutta. In 1730 the English sent a squadron under the command of Captain Gosfright to blockade the Hugli river. Of the two German ships, anchored between Calcutta and Bānkibāzār, one was captured by the English, but the other escaped to Bānkibāzār. Soon after this, the Dutch and the English combined and by bribing the faujdār of Hugli. succeeded in persuading the Nawāb to prohibit the Ostenders "from trading to Bengal". A body of troops, sent against them by the faujdār of Hugli under the command of an officer named Mir Ja'far, besieged their factory and chastised them. It is stated in the letter from the Council in Calcutta to the Court of Directors, dated the 16th January, 1733, that the English "agreed with the Dutch

[1] Letter to Court, 14th February, 1739, para 17; Ibid, 31st December, 1737, para 38.

to send a sloop each to give notice to the Guard-ships in case of any Ostender's arrival". They, "in conjunction with the Dutch", then paid two lacs of rupees to the Nawāb for his "connivance at their taking the Ostend Ships". The expedition against the Ostenders cost the English Rs. 14,212.

Stewart writes that the factory of the Ostend Company was now levelled to the ground and its last ships left Bengal in 1733. But a close study of some contemporary records of the English East India Company clearly shows that the Ostenders still traded in Bengal in their 'licensed ships' and the English remained jealous of them. Thus the Council in Calcutta wrote to the Court of Directors on the 26th December, 1733: "Shall prevent any Dealings being carryed on with them (Ostenders) or other new traders by those under their protection"; in May 1734 the Dutch and the English had a conference "to consider about Mr. Schonemil's hoisting the imperial Flag at the Ostend Factory". It was in 1744 A. D. that Alivardi, "on some contempt of his authority, attacked and drove the factors of the Ostend Company out" of the Hugli river.

Though the Dutch and French Companies sometimes co-operated with the English against the other European nations, each of them was the jealous commercial rival of the other two. Both the Dutch and the French "gave great encouragement" to the merchants of Bengal with a view to forestalling the English in procuring investments, and the merchants of the English Company sometimes complained that "they have not so much encouragement as the French and Dutch give theirs". The Council in Calcutta wrote to the Court of Directors on the 26th December, 1733: "Can not but see with much concern the French extending their traffick as they do . . . the great increase of the French private trade makes theirs hardly answer to the Risque (risk) of sending out ships". In 1735, apprehending a war with France, they decided to be "well on their Guard and not to suffer the least affront from the French ships to pass by unresented". But on getting "no further news of a war" they endeavoured "to keep on good terms with them". Their competition, however, became gradually keener than before. The Council in Calcutta informed the Court of Directors on the 29th November, 1735: "Have made some vigorous pushes to defeat the French in their trade to one of the most considerable Ports, who seem resolved to keep up their number of private ships; the French are less burthened with Duties than they and fear in the end will get the better of them". In fact, English investment, particularly in coarse goods, was then "affected by the Dutch and the French".

The authority of Shujā'-ud-din's government was strictly asserted over the European traders in Bengal. The English described him as a "rash and powerful subah," and did not think it proper to risk an "open rupture with him, which, as the Council in Calcutta apprehended, "will be a great advantage to their neighbours, who would push their trade with the more vigour, and not unlikely underhand assist the Government in order to supplant them, unless the Dutch and French Companys would enter into an agreement to resent all insults offered to either nation". Very often they had to conciliate the Nawāb by the payment of large sums of money, and their trade was sometimes interrupted by what they described as the "avaricious temper of this Government". They were also subject to occasional interferences and impositions at the hands of the Nawāb's officers in different parts of the province. Thus Shujā' Quli Khān, an intimate companion of Shujā'-ud-din since his early days at Burhānpur and subsequently appointed by him *faujdār* of Hugli, once demanded high duties from the English, the Dutch and the French. On being resisted by the Europeans, he decided to chastise them. He seized some bales of raw silk and cloths belonging to the English, which were, however, recovered by a body of troops sent from Calcutta to Hugli. But the *faujdār* soon persuaded the Nawāb to believe in the necessity of punishing the English, for which he secured from him a party of soldiers and soon stopped all supplies to the English settlements in Calcutta and at Qāsimbāzār. In this extreme situation the chief of the English factory at Qāsimbāzār was constrained to conciliate the Nawāb by promising him the payment of three lakhs of rupees as *nazars*. In 1733 the Nawab's officers at Dacca and Jagdiā proved "very troublesome" to the local English factors and "impeded their affairs". When in 1735 the *faujdār* of Balasore became "very insolent", the Council in Calcutta sent a sergeant and eight men "to maintain the Company's privileges". Gradually however, the Council in Calcutta avoided "engaging in dispute with the Government when their privileges were attacked". They expressed the opinion that "in relation to the impositions of the Government . . . it will be most advisable to submit to the expenses by making presents now and then to the under officers of the Durbar and those that have authority in several other places (to prevent them) from doing them ill offices".

Under instructions from the Court of Directors, the Council in Calcutta tried early in 1733 to secure orders from the Delhi Court favourable to their trade in Bengal. But the *hasb-ul-hukm* granted to them not being "so fully expressed as they would have it", they

sent the draft of another, better suited to their desire, to their *vakil* at Delhi directing him to obtain imperial consent to it by the payment of the amount demanded for it by the Court. But as the Council in Calcutta observed in November 1735, the Nawāb of Bengal was " too absolute to regard any orders from Court in their Favour ". In fact, they had to spend much to get back "the currency of their business" by the beginning of 1735. Even after this the Nawāb demanded in the same year "arrears of rent of their towns", reckoning from the date when it had been paid last to Murshid Quli Ja'far Khān. The Dutch too were asked to pay the same for their settlement at Barānagar. Mr Barker, Chief of the English factory at Qāsimbāzār, informed the Council in Calcutta that the Nawāb was " determined to have the money at all events, ' and that he apprehended an "open rupture" if the Nawāb was not soon satisfied. The Nawāb's demands were made on the grounds of extension of English private trade and the abuse of their *dastaks*. He complained that the English were " screening immense quantitys of Merchant' Goods, thereby defrauding the King of his customs ". As a matter of fact, the ' misapplication of dastaks ' in the private trade of the English was already a growing evil, which could not be stopped fully in spite of some precautionary steps on the part of the Company. The Council in Calcutta itself was opposed to the abolition of private trade. It wrote to the Court of Directors on the 31st December, 1737 :— "If with the Dutch the Company allowed no Private trade, their servants must starve, while the Dutch Live Great and Die Rich ; if the Private Trade was forbid still the Government would want money sometimes, they annually having something coming from other European Nations and yet do often squeeze them too, they will not see them lade even the Company's ships only without some Acknowledgement, are not to be trusted by agreeing for an annual sum but might increase it. Confining the Dusticks to the Company's Investment would be giving up (never to be recalled though desired) a great article in the Phirmaund."

The Nawāb did not drop his demand, but passed orders for the prevention of the saltpetre trade of the English at Patna and "stopped a great quantity of goods at Azimgānj" (near Murshidābād). The Council in Calcutta thereupon decided on the 26th January, 1736, " to give Mr. Barker etc a discretional power to accommodate matters with the Nawāb," as the Dutch had already done. At last, through the mediation of Hāji Āhmad, the Qāsimbāzār factors were able to satisfy the Nawāb by the payment of 55,000 rupees, and on the 6th July, 1736, they obtained *parwanahs*

for "the currency of their trade". Since then the English remained "on very good terms" with Shujā-ud-din.

V. Abwābs

Shujā-ud-din remitted Rs. 1,25,00,000 a year to the Delhi government[1], and thus the total amount of imperial tribute realised in Bengal and Bihār, during his administration of 11 years 8 months and 13 days, and sent to Delhi amounted to Rs. 14,62,78,538.[2] He retained the arrangements effected by his predecessor for the collection of revenue through the zamindārs. The 'standard assessment remained the same, that is, Rs. 1,42,45,561[3]. But a further amount of Rs. 19,14,095 was realised by Shujā'-ud-din through the imposition of *ābwābs* or additional imposts, in imitation of an old practice particularly followed by Murshid Quli. These *ābwābs* were of four kinds,—(*a*) *Nazarānā Mokarrari*,, that is, "fixed pecuniary acknowledgements paid by the zamindārs as farmers-general of the King's revenue virtually for improper remissions, indulgences, favour and protection; forbearance of *hustabood* investigations, or privilege of being freed from the immediate superintendence of 'āmils; but ostensibly and formally to defray the charge of *nazars* sent to court at the two principal yearly Mussalman festivals, and other great ceremonial days, in like manner as the jāgirdārs or holders of assigned territory were, as Mahomedans, with more propriety obliged to contribute their share of the whole demand"; (*b*) *Zar Māthoot* made up of four component *ābwābs* such as *Nazar Pooniah* or presents exacted from the zamindārs by the officers of the Exchequer at the annual settlement . . . . *Bahā-i-Khil'at* or price of the robes bestowed at the same time, on the most considerable landholders, as tokens of yearly investiture in their offices of farmers-general of the King's rent", *Pusta-bandi* "for upholding the river banks" in the vicinity of Lālbāgh and the port of Murshidābād, and *Russoom-nazārat* or "commission of ten annas per mile exacted by the *nazir jamā'dār* or head peon, on the treasure brought from the Mofussil"; (*c*) *Māthoot Filkhānā*, "a partial contribution . . . . to defray the expense of feeding the elephants of both the *nāzim* and *diwān*, kept at Murshidābād, levied for the most part on the interior districts,

[1] Letter to Court, 29th November, 1735, para 71.

[2] Grant would make this amount somewhat less, i. e. Rs. 11, 31, 40,338-14-8. *Grant's Analysis* in Firminger's *Fifth Report*, Vol. II, 209-12.

[3] *Minute of Shore, dated 18th June, 1789, respecting the Permanent Settlement of the Lands in the Bengal Provinces* in Ibid, p. 7, *Abwabs* in *ibid*, ii. 209-212.

in exclusion of Rokinpur and those to the frontiers on the east and west"; (*d*) *Faujdāri abwābs* or "limited permanent assessments on the land" levied by the *faujdārs* on the frontier districts.

These *ābwābs* were levied in general on the respective zamindārs in proportion to the standard assessment of each of them, but they too were authorised to collect these from their ryots in proportion to their respective quotas of rent. Further, nothing of this additional income was ever sent by Shujā'-ud-din to the Emperor of Delhi. It is also doubtful if any portion of it was spent for productive purposes. Most probably, the whole amount was consumed to meet the charges of the Nawāb's luxurious establishments.

According to some eighteenth century Indian historians, Shujā'-ud-din's regime was marked by peace and prosperity. Shore too observed in 1789 that it was "moderate, firm and vigilant, and seems the only part of the whole period (from Murshid Quli to Mir Qāsim), with an exception perhaps of the last years of 'Alivardi Khān, in which the conduct of the government was in any respect calculated for the improvement of the country".[1] But we have no sufficient data to enable us to determine accurately the immediate effect on the people in general of the impositions, levied on the zamindārs by the Nawābs, and the 'increased exactions' of the former from the ryots. These may not have been then felt to be very burdensome, and it may be that, due to the growth of commerce and increased imports of specie, "the resources of the country", as Mr. Shore points out, "were, at that period, adequate to the measure of exaction". But the same writer, who made a minute enquiry into the condition of land-tenures in Bengal for several years, prior to the introduction of the Permanent Settlement, aptly remarked that the "mode of imposition was fundamentally ruinous, both to the ryots and the zamindārs; and the direct tendency of it was, to force the latter into extortions, and all into fraud, concealment and distress". There is no doubt that it set a dangerous precedent, the imitation of which must have in future considerably strained the resources of the people during the second half of the 18th century, when Bengal had to pass through a very unhappy period due to acute economic troubles.

VI. Sarfarāz

Shujā'-ud-din died on the 13th March, 1739, and his body was interred in his favourite garden at Dāhāpārā. His son, Sarfarāz, entitled 'Alā-ud-daulah Haidar Jang, soon ascended the *masnad* of

[1] *Shore's Minute*, dated 18th June, in Firminger's *Fifth Report*, II. 9.

Bengal without any dispute. Acting according to the death-bed instructions of his father, the new subahdār retained the old officers, like Hāji Āhmad, the chief *diwān, Rāy-i-rāyān* Ālamchānd, *diwān* of the *Khālsā, and* some others, in the important departments of his government. But he had not the capacity needed for keeping them under proper control.

While observing merely the external formalities of religion, Sarfarāz was a man of low morals, too much addicted to the pleasures of the *harem,* and so he whiled away most of his hours in the company either of self-seeking and idle theologians or of the 1500 women of his *harem.* Not to speak of his want of strength of character and administrative genius, he lacked all the essential qualities needed for the ruler of a State and developed a foolish simple-mindedness, unbecoming of the position he held. The administration of the province consequently fell into confusion and disorder. This state of things emboldened the officials as well as the magnates of the province to augment their respective influence even at the cost of the Nawāb, who had ultimately to lose not only his throne but also his life as the price of his inefficiency.[1]

[1] Holwell, *Interesting Historical Events,* 75-77; Orme's *Indostan,* ii. 29. Yusuf 'Ali (constantly present with the Nawab during his year of rule.)

CHAPTER XXIII

ALIVARDI KHAN

I. Early career of Alivardi

The 18th century history of India was considerably influenced by the rise of Muslim adventurers of foreign extraction to exalted positions like Subahdārships, Nāib-Subahdārships, etc.; thus there was the Nizām-ul-mulk Āsaf Jāh in the Deccan, 1713; Sa'ādat 'Ali in Oudh, 1723; Saif-ud-daulah in the Panjab, 1713. In Bengal we find an example of this in the career of the immigrant Turko-Arab, Alivardi, who belonged to a family of adventurers.

Alivardi's original name[1] was Mirzā Bandé or Mirzā Muhammad 'Ali. His grandfather, an Arab by descent, was foster-brother of Aurangzeb and was exalted by the latter as a Mughal mansabdār. His father Mirzā Muhammad began his career as a cup-bearer in the service of 'Āzam Shah, the third son of Emperor Aurangzeb. Mirzā Muhammad's eldest son Mirzā Āhmad was born during the early years of Aurangzeb's reign, and his second son Mirzā Muhammad 'Ali was born ten years later in one of the cities of the Deccan. Mirzā Muhammad 'Ali's mother belonged to the Turki tribe of Āfshār, settled in Khurāsān, and was thus related to Shujā'uddin Muhammad Khan, son-in-law of Murshid Quli Ja'far Khan and Deputy Governor or Orissā in the time of that Nawab. Mirzā Muhammad's sons were favoured by 'Āzam Shah when they attained to the adult age. The elder, Mirzā Ahmad, was placed in charge of the *ābdārkhāna* (pantry) at Delhi, and Mirzā Muhammad 'Ali was appointed superintendent of the *filkhāna* (elephant-stables) and was also entrusted with the charge of the *zardozkhāna* (department of embroidered cloths).

The members of Mirzā Muhammad 'Ali's family were reduced to great distress after the death of their patron 'Āzam Shah in the bloody battle fought at Jājau near Agra in the month of June, 1707. But Mirzā Muhammad 'Ali's adversity could not damp his spirit. It rather trained him for his future eminence by compelling him to try his luck in the Bengal Subah, where in the court of Shujā'ud-din Muhammad Khan at Cuttack his father had already found a hospitable shelter. In 1720 he proceeded towards Bengal in a state of

[1] *RS* (English Trans.) 298; *I'mād-us-Sa'ādat*, f. 26.

extreme penury with his wife and daughters; but, on his arrival at Cuttack, Shujā'-ud-din received him cordially. Being endowed with a keen intellect and a capacity for judging and transacting the most delicate affairs as well as with great prowess and bravery, Mirzā Muhammad 'Ali soon made his influence felt in the government of Shujā'-ud-din. His brother Mirzā Āhmad, now called Hāji Āhmad after his return from Mecca, also came to Cuttack from Delhi, with his family consisting of three sons named Muhammad Razā, Āgā Muhammad Sa'id, and Mirzā Muhammad Hāshim. Hāji Āhmad soon got an appointment carrying a monthly salary of Rs 50/-, and his three sons were given posts on monthly salaries of Rs 30/-, 20/-, and Rs 10/-, respectively.

Through industry and tact Mirzā Muhammad 'Ali and Hāji Āhmad contributed in no small measure towards making the government of Shujā'-ud-din popular and respected, and gradually strengthened their personal influence in the State. They even helped their master in securing the *masnad* of Bengal, and were in return elevated to loftier positions. In 1728 Shujā-ud-din appointed Mirzā Muhammad 'Ali *faujdār* of Rājmahal, (which because of its strategic geographical position as the gate of Bengal was a place of historic importance in different periods), and conferred on him the title of Alivardi. The efficient administration of the *chakla* of Akbarnagar (Rājmahal) by Alivardi gave peace and prosperity to its people. Hāji Āhmad remained at Murshidabad as one of the principal advisers of Shujā'-ud-din; his eldest son Muhammad Razā (later on known as Nawāzish Muhammad Khan) was appointed *bakhshi* (paymaster) of the Nawab's troops and Superintendent of customs at Murshidabad; his second son Āga Muhammad Sa'id (later on called Sa'id Āhmad Khan) was appointed *faujdār* of Rangpur and his youngest son Mirzā Muhammad Hāshim (later on called Zainuddin Āhmad Khan) was invested with the title of Khan[1].

It would appear from the accounts of writers like Salimullah, Holwell and Scrafton, that the two brothers asserted their influence in Shujā'ud-din's court through some ignoble and unworthy tractics, Salimullah writes that they engaged their begams to humour Shujā'-ud-din. Holwell observes that Hāji Āhmad "soon found out the great foible of his master, which was an ungovernable appetite for a variety of women, and by indulging and feeding this passion, quickly gained an ascendant over his master, and had the disposal of all places, small or of importance; and as he was observed to be the growing favourite, all suits and petitions were preferred through

[1] Yusuf Ali and *Siyar*, ii.

his mediation[1] Scrafton has gone so far as to note that Hāji Āhmad "made a sacrifice of his own daughter to his master's lust"[2]. But these accounts do not seem to be reliable. Salimullah does not always write about Alivardi as an impartial critic, while the statements of Holwell and Scrafton being based mostly on secondary sources are in many cases inaccurate. Their observations, especially those of Holwell, cannot always be regarded as historically true, unless they are corroborated by other sources. Hāji Āhmad was of course cunning and tactful, and was not personally a man of sound morals, but there is no evidence reliable and impartial enough to justify us in asserting that he sacrificed numerous women, including some of his own family, for the fulfilment of his own designs. Even if he is accused as having humoured his master by pandering to his tastes, the gradual elevation of Mirzā Muhammad 'Ali was in fact the outcome of his loyal and skilful services to his patron in matters of administration.

II. Alivardi as Deputy-Governor of Bihār

Alivardi's fortune took a brilliant turn with his appointment as the Deputy Governor of Bihār, when it was added to Bengal by the Delhi Emperor about 1733 A. D. after the dismissal of its old governor Fakhr-ud-daulah, who being an uneducated, arrogant, proud and self-indulgent man, had unwisely provoked Khān-i-Daurān Samsām-ud-daulah by insulting his brother Khwāja Mu'tasam who was then leading a retired religious life at Patna. Alivardi started for 'Azimābād in 1733, with five thousand men, cavalry and infantry, his two sons-in-law, his newly born grandson Mirzā Muhammad (later Nawab Sirāj-ud-daulah) and several other relatives. Shujā'-ud-din soon procured for him from the Delhi court the title of Mahābat Jang, the rank of a *5-hazāri* mansabdār, and the honour of possessing a fringed pālki (*palanquin*), a standard and kettledrums.

The province of Bihār was then in a greatly disturbed state due to the weak and capricious government of Fakhr-ud-daulah. But Alivardi faced the situation bravely. He reduced to submission the refractory zamindars of the province, like the rajahs of Bettiā, Bhanwārah, Bhojpur, Rajah Sundar Singh of Tikāri and Kāmgār Khān Ma'in of Narhat-Samāī[3], and compelled them to pay the

1 *Interesting Historical Events*, Part I, p. 61.

2 *Reflections on the Government of Indostan.*

3 Bhanwārah—It has been mentioned as a mahal under sarkar Tirhut in Subah Bihar in *Ain* (transl), Vol II, 156. Stewart (*History of Bengal*, 478) wrongly calls it Phoolwareh. Phulwari was a mahal in sarkar Bihar.

government dues which they had withheld for several years. He brought under control the chief of the Chakwārs, a brave Hindu tribe who, with their stronghold at Sambho in the Begusarāi subdivision of the Monghyr District, had long defied the authority of the Subahdārs of Bengal and "laid everything that passed the river by Monghyr under contribution, and put the European settlements to an annual heavy expense of a large armament to escort their trade to and from Patna"[1] He similarly chastised the turbulent Banjarās, who in the guise of traders and travellers had been devastating different parts of Bihar. Peace and order returned to the province as a result of Alivardi's successful administration. He thus found means both to secure Shujā'-ud-din's goodwill and augment his own power and influence.

Taking advantage of the weakness of Sarfarāz, Alivardi and Hāji Āhmad soon formed the design of seizing the government of Bengal. Shrewd and ambitious, they realised that the time was an opportune one for their aggrandisement, as not only was the Bengal subahdār an utterly incompetent moral wreck, but the indolent Delhi Emperor too, then shorn of prestige as a result of Nādir Shāh's invasion, was not in a position to check their pretensions. Some self-interested counsellors of Sarfarāz like Hāji Lutf 'Ali, Mir Murtaza, Mardān 'Ali Khan and others, who were not on good terms with the two brothers, poisoned his mind against them and opened his eyes to their mischievous activities. The estrangement between them and the Nawab thus growing wider and wider, they decided to strike as quickly as possible to realise their end. They were able to secure the friendship of a prominent official of the Nawab's *darbār*, Ālamchand, and that of Jagat Seth Fatehchand, whose changed attitude towards the son of the deceased Nawab was due more to their desire to exploit his distracted situation to their own advantage than to any other motive. There is no reliable evidence for asserting that the Nawab, though a dissipated youth, ever took any direct step, calculated to tarnish the honour of the two brothers. His great

Narhat—This zamindari extended along the south-east of zila Bihār. Buchanan, *Patna-Gaya Report*, Vol. II, 588-89. For an account of the Mayin family *vide ibid*, 56, 96, 176, 181, 219, 269, 584, 590, 591.

[1] Holwell, *Interesting Historical Events* 68-70. This is corroborated by several references in Fort William *Consultations* 1718-22 A. D. (Wilson, 50, 153 246, 255, 275, 283, 325, 353). The late Rai Sahib Rashdhari Singh of Chitror in the Begusarai subdivision of Monghyr claimed descent from the Chakwars.

For accounts of the Banjaras vide Peter Mundy, Vol. II, 95-96; Tavernier, Vol. I, 30; E & D, Vol. v, 10; *RS* (transl), 296; Mill's *British India*, Vol V, Ch, IV; Malcolm, *Memoir of Central India*, Vol. II, 152; Crooke, *Tribes and Castes of N. W. P. and Oudh*, Vol I, 179.

defect, however, was that he was devoid of far-sighted vision and of the capacity to act rightly, which made him totally unfit for the task of administration. In short, the conspiracy of 1739-40 was the outcome of ambition and ingratitude on the one hand, and disgraceful inefficiency on the other. Its leaders decided among themselves to call Alivardi from Patna and install him on the *masnad* of Bengal. Hāji Āhmad, then present at the Murshidabad *darbār*, lost no opportunity to fan the flames of his brother's ambition and hostility against Sarfarāz by sending to him true as well as distorted reports about the Nawab's conduct and movements.

Alivardi also prepared himself most cautiously and tactfully for the inevitable conflict. He had an old friend at the imperial Court, named Ishāq Khan I, then enjoying the confidence and favour of the Emperor Muhammad Shah. He wrote a private letter to him with a view to obtaining patents granting him the government of Bengal, Bihār and Orissá, in return for which he promised to send to the imperial Court a present of one krore of rupees over and above the usual annual tribute amounting to one krore and some lakhs. He also requested him through another letter for an imperial order permitting him to wrest the *masnad* of Bengal from Sarfarāz Khan by force of arms.

III. Alivardi seizes Bengal throne

Having taken all possible precautions, Alivardi marched from Patna for Bengal, towards the end of March 1740, with about 7000 cavalry, a large body of infantry, and a strong artillery. Crossing the Rājmahal hills, which stood as the natural defence of Bengal against any external invasion from the north-west, through the Shāhābād and Teliāgarhi passes, he arrived within the jurisdiction of the chakla of Akbarnagar (Rājmahal). Sarfarāz had till then no knowledge of Alivardi's movements, as all means of communication from Bihār to Bengal had been stopped by 'Atāullah Khan, *faujdār* of Rājmahal, under the instructions of his father-in-law Hāji Āhmad.

In justification of his own conduct, and with a view to making the position of Hāji Āhmad and his other relatives staying in Murshidabad safe before actually striking against Sarfarāz, Alivardi now wrote a letter to the Nawab to the following effect: —"Since, after my brother Hāji Āhmad has been insulted in various ways, attempts have been made to injure the prestige of our family, your servant in order to save that family from further disgrace has been compelled to come so far, but with no other sentiments than those

of fidelity and submission. Your servant hopes, therefore, that Hāji Āhmad would be permitted to come to him with his family and dependants". This letter came to Sarfarāz as a bolt from the blue. He was at his wits' end to decide what he should do with Hāji Āhmad and consulted his officers on this point. On the advice of some of them, he permitted the Hāji to proceed to his brother. This was indeed a great blunder on his part, as the two brothers were now able to act directly in concert with each other against him. Shrewd enough not to expose himself till he had come to his brother, Hāji Āhmad deceived the Nawab, in the course of his journey, by false professions of friendship and fidelity.

Alivardi's advance into Bengal naturally caused intense anxiety to Sarfarāz, and his chastisement was considered necessary by the generals of the Nawab. Sarfarāz himself marched out of Murshidabad on the 6th April, 1740, at the head of 4000 cavalry and a large body of infantry, leaving his son Hāfizullah surnamed Mirzā Āmāni and his faujdār Yasin Khan in charge of that city. Marching through Bāhmaniā, Dewānsarāi and Komrāh, Sarfarāz reached Giriā. Alivardi had in the meanwhile encamped in an area stretching from Aurangabad beyond Suti to Charkā Baliāghātā. Each party had nearly an 'equal force', that is about 20,000 infantry and 10,000 cavalry[1]. Sarfarāz had 20 pieces of artillery but Alivardi too had some. Further, the latter had 3000 Afghans in his cavalry and "his infantry levied in Bihar were much stouter than those in the army of Sarfarāz Khan, who were mostly natives of Bengal". After some futile negotiations for compromise, Alivardi marched towards Sarfarāz's camp at two o'clock in the night of 9th April, 1740, and fell upon it early in the next morning. A furiously contested battle ensued, causing a stampede and heavy casualties in Safarāz's army. A chance shot on his forehead killed the Nawab and his body was carried to Murshidabad to be buried there at Nuktākhāli (now known as Naginābāgh) on the east side of the city, by his son Hāfizullah Khan and the faujdār Yasin Khan. Some devoted Muslim as well as Hindu generals of Sarfarāz tried to avenge the death of their master and rushed valiantly against Alivardi, but

[1] Suti lies about 24 miles N. W. of Murshidabad city; Giriā is situated about 22 miles to the N. W. of Murshidabad city on the alluvial plain south of Suti at the angle formed by the cutting of the Bhāgirathi from the main stream of the Ganges. Aurangabad lies about 8 miles to the N. W: of Suti; Charka Bāliāghātā refers to the two villages of Charkā and Bāliāghātā lying close to each other, the former about 4 miles and the latter about 5 miles to the south of Giria. Bāhmaniāh is situated about 4 miles, Dewānsarāi about 12 miles and Komrāh about 20 miles north of Murshidabad city.

Holwell, *Interesting Historical Events*, 95; Orme, *Indostan*, Vol. II, 31.

their efforts ended in failure before the opposite party, now flushed with victory.

The battle of Giriā brought the *masnad* of Bengal within Alivardi's grasp. Two or three days after this battle he entered the city of Murshidabad and tried to soothe the wounded feelings of the relatives of Sarfarāz by showing himself penitent for his vile deed. Sarfarāz's sister Nafisā Begam was allowed to take possession of a portion of the *khas tāluq* (personal demesne of Murshid Quli) yielding an annual revenue of one lakh, besides keeping her own property, and all the members of the late Nawab's family were granted allowances, due care being taken to maintain the dignity of his infant son Ākā Bābā. After some time Nafisā Begam was taken to Dacca by Nawāzish Muhammad, who respected her as a mother and entrusted her with the control of his household affairs. Alivardi seized the wealth of the late Nawab amounting to about 70 lakhs in cash and jewels, gold and silver bullion, and other precious things worth five krores of rupees. Some additional wealth belonging to Hāji Lutf Ali, Minuchihr Khan and Mir Murtazā was confiscated under his orders.

IV. Alivardi Khan as Nawab of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa

Having formally ascended the *masnad* in the *Chihil Satun*, Alivardi effected some changes in the officers of the government. His nephew Nawāzish Muhammad was appointed Diwān of Crown-lands and Deputy Governor of Dacca with Husain Quli Khan as his deputy. The Deputy Governorship of Bihār fell to Alivardi's youngest nephew, Zainuddin, who had married his daughter Āminā Begam (mother of Sirāj-ud-daulah). 'Abdul 'Ali Khan, maternal uncle of the historian Ghulām Husain and a cousin of Alivardi, was placed in charge of the government of Tirhut in addition to his duties as the revenue-collector of the parganas of Bihār and Biswāk. Mir Muhammad Ja'far Khan was made the paymaster of the old army in the place of Alivardi's brother-in-law Qāsim 'Ali Khan, who was appointed *faujdār* of Rangpur, while the paymastership of the new army was entrusted to Nasrullah Beg Khan. Mirzā Mazar *alias* Haidar 'Ali Khan, a cousin of Husain Quli Khan, was appointed superintendent of the Nawab's artillery. On the death of the diwān Alamchand, his peshkār Chin Rāy was made diwān of peshdasti and diwān of khālsa with the title of Rāy-i-Rāyān. Jānkirām diwān of Alivardi's house-hold affairs, became diwān of the miscellaneous departments. 'Atāullah Khan, a son-in-law of Hāji Āhmad, who had

served as the faujdār of Rājmahal since the time of Nawab Shujā'-ud-din, was made faujdār of Bhāgalpur also, and Ghulām Husain, an old follower of Alivardi became his chamberlain (*hājib*) in the place of Mir Murtazā.

It took some time for Alivardi to remove the bad impression that had been created in the minds of the people by his ungrateful conduct towards Sarfarāz. Khwāja 'Abdul Karim tells us that "by behaving kindly and being on friendly terms with all, by distributing money and by acting with discretion, Alivardi gained over to his cause all men living far and near". He also secured a formal recognition of his new authority from the Delhi Emperor Muhammad Shah by profusely bribing him and the principal nobles and officers like the wazir, Qamruddin Khan, the *Bakhshi,* Āsaf Jāh Nizām-ul-Mulk, and others. It should be noted that though the Mughal Empire had virtually collapsed by the middle of the 18th century, yet the name of the Emperor and the fiction of imperial suzerainty were sought to be utilised by almost all who were then trying to build political supremacy in India. During the second half of that century, the Marathas, the English and also the French, tried to use this fiction to serve their own ends.

The Bengal revolution of 1739-40 was a significant episode not only in the history of that province, but also in that of the decadent Mughal Empire. It is a clear illustration of the grossly vitiated atmosphere of the age, and of the effects of treachery, ungratefulness and inordinate ambition. Alivardi's behaviour towards Sarfarāz, the son of his benefactor, was certainly abominable, so much so that even Ghulām Husain, with his usual partiality for Alivardi, could not justify it wholly. A Nemesis followed it when his favourite grandson and successor Sirāj-ud-daulah fell a victim to the same forces which had worked to cause the ruin of Sarfarāz. It might very well be said that the battle of Plāssey was the reply of divine justice to the battle of Giriā. To sanction such an act of usurpation in return for a bribe was certainly an ignoble transaction on the part of the Delhi Emperor and his court. The fact that the supreme head of a State and its highest executive, could sell themselves for a mess of pottage, was an ample proof of the growing moral bankruptcy of the Mughal Empire, which was soon to bring about its tragic collapse.

V. Subjugation of Orissā by Alivardi

The battle of Giriā brought Bengal under Alivardi's control, but Orissā, which for various reasons formed an important part of the Bengal Subah, still remained unsubdued. Its Deputy Governor, Rustam Jang (originally known as Murshid Quli II), son-in-law of

Nawab Shujā-ud-din, being goaded by his wife Dardāna Begam, refused to recognise the usurper's authority. With a strong determination to reconquer Bengal, he started from Cuttack towards Balasore in the month of December 1740. Alivardi also marched out of his capital in January 1741, accompanied by his nephew Saulat Jang and a large body of troops, with a view to opposing him. The zamindārs of Midnapur were won over by Alivardi, but, while crossing the river Subarnarekhā, he met with furious opposition at the ferry of Rājghāt, from Rajah Raghunath Bhanja of Mayurbhanj. He was able to overcome this opposition quickly, and having crossed the river fixed his camp at Rāmchandrapur,, situated at a distance of three miles from Rustam Jang's camp at Phulwāri (four miles north of Balasore town). But shortage of provisions caused some trouble to him. The zamindārs of Midnapur and the neighbouring areas failed to supply him with the requisite quantity of food-stuffs. The little that could be sent by them, was intercepted on the way by the other zamindārs of Orissā, who out of their love for Rustam Jang, were not well-disposed towards the usurper. In such critical circumstances, Alivardi thought of coming to terms with Rustam Jang, but Mustafā Khan screwed him up and advised him to wait during the rainy season in his entrenchments and attempt the conquest of Orissā after its expiry.

The collision, however, came about soon. Mirzā Bāqar, the youthful son-in-law of Rustam Jang, took the offensive by proceeding against Alivardi's troops, and a bloody fight ensued. But fortune went against Rustam Jang, who was defeated at Phulwāri on the 3rd of March, 1741, and Mirza Bāqar was severely wounded. Rustam Jang fled with his wounded son-in-law to Masulipatam, his family consisting of his begam, a son, and a daughter being left in a forlorn condition in the fort of Bārābāti. They were fortunately saved from being captured by Alivardi's men through the timely aid of the zamindār of Khurdā, who was a friend of Rustam Jang. His general Shāh Murād safely conducted them to Inchāpur in the Ganjam district, whence they were brought to Mirzā Bāqar. They had to spend their days in a destitute condition in the Deccan.

Alivardi remained in Orissā for a month in order to consolidate his authority there. He left his nephew and son-in-law Sa'id Āhmad Khan, surnamed Mahām-ud-daulah Saulat Jang, as Deputy Governor of Orissā and returned to Murshidabad. But this was a bad choice. Saulat Jang was quite unfit for governing a newly-acquired country. His intemperance, folly and over-bearing manners soon made him unpopular and gave an opportunity to the old officers and partisans of Rustam Jang to invite Mirzā Bāqar. After the soldiers of Saulat

Jang, newly recruited in Orissā and less faithful than the Bengal troops who had returned discontented from Orissā due to his ill-advised policy of reducing their pay, had openly revolted against him, Mirzā Bāqar reentered Cuttack with a batch of Maraṭha infantry in the month of August 1741. Saulat Jang and his entire family were captured and placed under strict confinement in the fortress of Bārābāti. Midnapur and Hijli also soon fell under the control of Mirzā Bāqar.

This was a severe blow not only to Alivardi's newly established authority in Orissā but also to his prestige. Saulat Jang's parents, Hāji Ahmad and his wife, requested him to secure the release of their son by permitting Mirzā Bāqar to enjoy the government of Orissā. But he decided to restore his prestige and power by effecting the rescue of his nephew and frustrating Mirzā Bāqar's aims. He left Murshidabad for Orissā at the head of 20,000 cavalry, strengthened by a good corps of artillery, and defeated Mirzā Bāqar at Rāipur on the southern bank of the Mahānadi in the month of December, 1741. Mirzā Bāqar again ran away to the Deccan with his Maratha allies by the road of Champāghāti. He was able, through the help of Murād Khan, commander-in-chief of the Raja of Khurdā, to baffle the attempts of some Afghan generals of Alivardi to capture him. Saulat Jang was then rescued by some generals of Alivardi, like Mir Muhammad Ja'far Khan, Mir Muhammad Āmin Khan (a stepbrother of Alivardi and brother-in-law of Mir Ja'far) and others, and was sent back to Murshidabad with a portion of the Nawāb's army, and thus only five thousand cavalry and some of his leading officers remained with Alivardi.

The Nawab stayed in Orissā for about three months with a view to restoring order in its government. He appointed his friend Shaikh Ma'sum, a native of Pānipat and a brave general, Deputy Governor of Orissā, and Durlabhrām, son of Rajah Jānkirām his *peshkār,* and started back for Bengal. On the way he halted at Balasore in order to punish the Rajah of Mayurbhanj for his unfriendly behaviour during the recent war. While he was at Jaygarh, near Midnapur, one of his revenue-collectors in that quarter reported to him the news of a Maratha advance towards Bengal.

Thus Alivardi was not destined to enjoy peacefully the kingdom which he had gained by his cleverly engineered plots and hard fightings. The repeated incursions of the Marathas complicated by the rebellions of the Nawab's Afghan soldiers in 1745 and 1748, gave him no rest during the greater part of his rule, devastated his province, affected its trade and manufactures most injuriously, paved

the way for its economic decline which became so alarming after 1757, and also ultimately led to the establishment of Maratha supremacy over Orissā. This subject will be treated in the next chapter.

Alivardi concluded a treaty with the Marathas in May or June 1751 and thus became comparatively free to devote his attention to the task of healing the wounds that had been inflicted on Bengal by the Maratha ravages. With a view to giving more efficiency to the administrative machinery, he made some new appointments. Rājārām Singh, hitherto head of the espionage department, was appointed faujdār of Midnapur and Karam Ali, the author of *Muzaffarnāmah,* faujdār of Ghorāghāt. On the death of the Nawab's old diwān Biru Dutt, Raja Kiratchand the son of Rāy-i-Rāyān Ālamchand. was appointed in his place. Kiratchand died after two years when his deputy Ummid Rāy succeeded him with the title of Rāy-i-Rāyān. On the death of Raja Jānkirām, deputy governor of Bihār, in the year 1752, his office was conferred upon his diwan Rāmnārāin[1]. Durlabhrām, son of Raja Jānkirām. was elevated to the post of the diwān of the military department and also began to act as the agent (*vakil*) of Rāmnārāin at the Murshidabad court.

VI. Last days of Alivardi

But the zeal of the Nawab, about 76 years old in 1751, for ameliorative measures was not destined to contribute to the welfare of the province much longer. Some premature bereavements in his family made his last days extremely unhappy. Ikrām-ud-daulah, the younger brother of Sirāj-ud-daulah, who had been brought up with care by Shahāmat Jang as an adopted son, died of small-pox in the year 1754 A. D. Shahāmat Jang, overpowered by grief for the boy, died from an attack of dropsy on the 17th December, 1755. His

[1] *Siyar,* ii. 593; *Muzaffarnāmah,* f. 89B. We get a short account of Ramnarain's family in the preface to the *Diwan-i-Mauzoom* of Raja Ramanarain compiled by Rai Lachman Prasad in 1870 A. D. and published by the Nawal Kishore Press in the same year. Ramnarain's father Rang Lal, a Srivastava Kayastha, originally lived in the village of Kishunpur in pargana Sāsarām of Shahabad district. Rang Lal held an inferior post in the Bihar government during the Deputy-Governorship of Alivardi. Rāmnārāin first entered public life as a khāsnavis during the administration of Zainuddin. Because of his merit he was appointed in a few years *peshkār* of the *Diwān* and then Diwān under Raja Jānkirām. Rāmnārain was well versed in Persian. He remained in charge of the Bihār government for 11 years. A representative of his family, Rai Mathurā Prasad, B.A., still occupies his old house at Mahārājghāt in Patna city.

brother, Saulat Jang, followed him to the grave on the 26th of February, 1756.

These calamities caused a terrible depression in the mind of the old Nawab and affected his health seriously. He was attacked by dropsy on the 10th of February, 1756; the best efforts of the renowned physicians failed to cure him, and he expired at 5 A. M. on the 10th April, 1756, at the age of eighty. His body was buried near his mother's grave at Khushbāgh, on the west bank of the Bhāgirathi, opposite the Motijhil outside the Murshidabad city. Just before his death he gave the following advice to Sirāj-ud-daulah:—"My darling! the strength of youth has given place to the weakness of old age and the inevitable death is near me. Through the grace of God, I have carved out a very rich dominion for you. Now my last words to you are that you should try to suppress the enemies of the kingdom and to elevate its friends, and that you should devote yourself to securing the well-being of your subjects by removing all evils and disorders. Union brings forth prosperity and disunion causes misery. Your government would be stable if its foundation is laid on the goodwill of the governed. If you take to the ways of malice and hostility, the garden of your prosperity will wither away". (*Muzaffarnāmah*, f. 101*b*.)

VII. Alivardi's character and habits

In his private life Alivardi was free from the prevailing vices of the great in that age. Trained in the school of adversity in his early days, he developed a puritanic temperament and was not addicted to debauchery or drunkenness. Orme has justly remarked that "his private life was very different from the usual manners of a Mahometan prince in Indostan; for he was always extremely temperate, had no pleasures, kept no seraglio and always lived the husband of one wife". Though, as M. Jean Law, the then chief of the French factory at Qāsimbāzār, observes "deceitful and ambitious in the highest degree", he had an implicit faith in God, and often utilised his leisure hours in studying books on theology and history.

Regular in his daily habits, Alivardi apportioned his time in such a way as to enable him to pay proper attention to each duty. He left his bed two hours before day-light and having finished the usual ablutions, performed the additional prayers. After the first obligatory prayer he drank coffee in the company of some choice friends, and next sat in his *darbār* at 7 A.M. to transact the affairs of the State. Here he granted interviews to his principal civil and

military officers and gave suitable replies to their queries. After two hours he retired into a closet with some of his favourite friends and his nephews, Shahāmat Jang, and Saulat Jang, and his grandson Sirāj-ud-daulah. For full one hour he amused himself by listening to verses and stories. Fond of delicious food, he sometimes personally supervised the preparation of his victuals and suggested new methods of cooking to his cook. He always took his dinner in company with a large number of guests. After dinner he enjoyed a short nap, attended by story-tellers and guards. He left his bed at I P. M., and after finishing his noon-day prayers read aloud a chapter of the Quran before devoting himself to his evening prayers. A cup of water cooled with saltpetre or ice, according to the season, was drunk by him to the dregs, as this answered his necessity for full twenty-four hours. He next conversed with some pious and learned men, and after their departure spent full two hours in transacting the affairs of government. Early in the night he first attended to the necessary prayers, after which his Begam, Sirāj-ud-daulah's Begam, and other ladies of his family appeared before him. He ate only some fruits and sweetmeats in their company before going to bed.

Alivardi was a brave warrior. He knew, writes M. Jean Law, how to command an army. Ghulam Husain observes that "in generalship he had no equal in his age except Asaf Jah Nizam-ul-mulk." He had a great fondness for keeping animals, seeing animalfights, and chasing wild animals. A letter from the French Council at Chandernagore to M. Le Vernier, the French Chief of Surat, dated 11th January, 1746, states :— "The Nawab has been requesting us for a long time to have Persian cats. Can you send two of them on the American vessels which will start from your place in May for their destination in the Ganges? He has demanded white and male cats". In 1749 the English tried to please him by presenting a fine Arab horse, and in 1754 also they sent him one Persian cat. For his hunting excursions the Nawab went during the winter to the hills of Rajmahal.

Alivardi was a kind and generous master, well attentive to the interests of the officers of his government. He extended his favours, in the shape of money or posts, to the relatives of his old friends at Delhi, from whom he had received help during his early days of adversity. He patronised arts and letters, and his court was adorned by a number of scholars proficient in different branches of learning. The more important of them were Maulavi Nasir 'Ali Khan, his son Dāud 'Ali Khan, Zākir Husain Khan, Mir Muhammad 'Ālim, Maulavi Muhammad 'Ārif, Mir Rustam 'Ali, Shāh Muhammad Āmin, Shāh Ādham, Hyāt Beg, Shāh Khizr, Sayyid Mir Muhammad

Sajjād, Sayyid, 'Ālimullah, (the grandfather of the historian Ghulām Husain), Shah Haidari (a matneral uncle of Ghulām Husain's paternal grandfather), and Qāzi Ghulām Muzaffar whom Alivardi elevated to the office of the supreme judge of Murshidabad. Azimabad (Patna) was an important centre of Persian education and some scholars from Persia came to settle there in his time. (*Siyar.*, ii. 611-620).

Due to the constant engagement of Alivardi with the Marathas, during the first eleven years of his administration, he could not undertake any productive work during this period. But with comparative security after the treaty of 1751 with the Marathas, he "applied himself with judgement and alacrity to the repose and security of his subjects and never afterwards deviated in the smallest degree from these". He turned his attention towards repairing the towns and villages, which had suffered from the ravages of the Marathas, and also towards improving the condition of agriculture. "The custom then was to settle the *mālguzāri* (land-assessment) with the different zamindars on moderate terms; the Nawab (Alivardi) abided by this agreement; the zamindars had a natural interest in their districts, and gave proper encouragement to the ryots (peasant-cultivators), when necessary would wait for their rents, and borrow money to pay their own *mālguzāri* punctually. There were in all districts shroffs (money-lenders, bankers) ready to lend money to zamindars when requested, and even to the ryots, which enabled many to cultivate their grounds, which otherwise they could not have done[1].

The masses of the people were not directly subjected to forcible exaction of money by the government. But, under pressure of extraordinary financial needs due to the Maratha raids, the Nawab took 'casual aids' from European trading companies and some of the chief zamindars of the province, like Raja Rāmkānta of Rajshahi, Raja Rāmnāth of Dinājpur, and Mahārājā Krishnachandra of Nadiā, whose jurisdictions were free from Maratha ravages. Further, like Murshid Quli Ja'far Khan and Shujā'-ud-din he levied *ābwābs* on the zamindars, the total of which amounted to Rs. 22,25,554,[2] and the indirect effects of which must have been similar to what has been already noted about the impositions of his predecessors.

[1] *Calendar of Persian Correspondence*, Vol. II, 191 & 197. *Siyar*, Vol. II, 591 Letter from Mr. Richard Becher to the Secret Committee of the Court of Directors dated 24th May, 1769, quoted in Ramsay Muir's *Making of British India*, 92-95.

[2] Firminger, *Fifth Report*, Vol. II, 217, II.

VIII. Relation with the European trading Companies

Alivardi realised the importance of looking after the traders in his province for its economic prosperity. "He understood perfectly well", remarked M. Jean Law, "the interests of his government, favoured the poor merchants and administered justice when complaints succeeded in reaching him". The council in Calcutta observed in 1747 that it had been "customary at these *darbārs* (of the Nawab and the Deputy Nawabs) to allow merchants to settle their accounts in a fair manner whenever it has been required by either party".[1] Mr. Scrafton writes that "he used to compare the Europeans to a hive of bees of whose honey you might reap the benefit, but that if you disturbed their hive they would sting you to death"[2]. He did not harass them unnecessarily, but it was only in times of extreme need that he asked them to render him financial help. Thus, hard pressed by the Maratha invasions, he exacted contributions from the English, the French and the Dutch for the safety of the province of Bengal, where "they participated of (in) the protection of his arms" and enjoyed the profits of trade. In July 1744 A. D., he accused the English of assisting the Marathas and pointed out that "the English (who now) carried on the Trade of the whole World, used (formerly) to have 4 or 5 ships, but now brought 40 or 50 sail, which belonged not to the Company . . .". The English were ordered not to carry on their trade unless they supplied him with three millions of rupees to clear off two months' pay of his soldiers and some of their *gumāshtas* were actually arrested and military guards were posted at their *gurrah* aurungs (coarse cotton cloth factories). After several unsuccessful attempts to conciliate the Nawab through his friend Jagat Seth Fatehchand, his nephew Sa'id Ahmad Khan, and one of his officers named Chin Rāy, Mr. Forster, chief of the English factory at Qasimbazar, paid a visit to the Nawab according to the instructions of the Council in Calcutta. He was graciously received by the Nawab was presented with a *saropā*, (a full *khil'at* or dress of honour), and was able to effect a settlement in the month of September by agreeing to pay him three lakhs and a half. The Cāsimbāzār factors had to pay an additional amount of Rs. 30,500 to the Nawab's generals and officers; the Patna factors had also to present Rs. 5,000 to the Nawab and Rs. 3,000 to his officers, besides signing a paper for the annual rent of the Chapra town at the rate

[1] Hill, Vol. III, 160.
Letter to Court, 22nd February, 1747, para 189.
[2] Scrafton, *Reflections on the Govt. of Indostan.*

of Rs. 4,537 ; and the Dacca factors too were obliged to pay Rs. 5,000. A fine horse was also presented to the Nawab which cost 25000 Madras rupees. The restrictions on the Company's trade were then removed and its *gumāstas* were released.

But more than four years did not elapse after this when fresh troubles arose. In the year 1748 Commodore Griffin, or some men of his squadron, captured some trading vessels of the Armenian and the Mughal merchants of Bengal, who complained before the Nawab for redress. The Nawab thereupon sent a parwanah to Governor Barwell demanding the delivery of "all the merchants' goods and effects" and adopted various repressive measures against the English Company| This obstructed the Company's trade in the different factories and added to its pecuniary troubles. After various attempts the Company could at last persuade the Armenians to express satisfaction regarding the losses sustained by them in a public darbar held by the Nawab on the 15th October, 1749. The English had also to satisfy the Nawab by the payment of one lakh and fifty thousand rupees, which they borrowed with great difficulty from the Seths. He at last issued a *parwānah* in favour of the Company's trade on 8th October, 1752.

Alivardi was always particular about exerting his authority as the subahdār of the province over the European traders. "He was", writes M. Jean Law, "zealous of his authority. He especially affected a great independence whenever there was question of any affair between himself and the Europeans. To speak to him of *farmāns* or of privileges obtained from the Emperor was only to anger him. He knew well how to say at the proper moment that he was both King and Wazir". In the month of July, 1745, he issued a *parwānah* asking the English, the French, and the Dutch not to carry on "any hostilities against each other in his dominions", during the war of the Austrian Succession (1740-48). Point Palmyras was fixed as the point whence neutrality should be observed. In spite of this prohibition the English and the Dutch in Bengal allied themselves against the French, and their mutual relations continued to be hostile till the suspension of their conflicts in Europe. But the Nawab always tried to maintain a strict control over them so that they might not encroach upon the field of politics in Bengal as they had already done in the Deccan. M. Jean Law writes that "he saw with equal indignation and surprise the progress of the French and the English nations on the Coromandal coast as well as in the Deccan, for by means of his spies he was informed of everything that happened there . . . . He feared that sooner or later the Europeans would attempt similar enterprises in his government".

Thus, he did not allow the English and the French to build fortifications in Calcutta and Chandernagore respectively, just as Murshid Quli Ja'far Khan had stopped the construction of forts by the English Company in 1718. "You are merchants", Alivardi often said to the French and the English *vakils*, "what need have you of a fortress? Being under my protection you have no enemies to fear".

Thus Alivardi's attitude towards the European traders in Bengal was strict, but he was not oppressive towards them. He exacted money from them occasionally under pressing financial needs due to extraordinary circumstances, and not on "groundless pretences" as the Council at Fort St. George wrongly reported to Admiral Watson in August 1756. He did not certainly contemplate the expulsion of the Europeans from his province or the destruction of their trade in any way. A contemporary French writer observed that the Nawab "was very fond of the Europeans and they all feared the moment of his death because of the disturbances which might then take place". The Dutch at Chinsurā remarked in their petition to Sirāj-ud-daulah, dated 26th June, 1756, that previously they had "generally been befriended and countenanced by the Princes of the land and, up to the glorious Nawab Shujā'-ul-mulk Mahābat Jang (Alivardi) inclusive, always endowed with privileges". About the year 1755 the Danes were permitted by Alivardi to settle at Serampore.

J. Z. Holwell's charge that in his death-bed speech Alivardi instructed his grandson Sirāj-ud-daulah to suppress the Europeans, seems to be a concoction. Holwell had the habit of inventing stories or fabricating facts to suit his motives[1]. Further, his charge against Alivardi is refuted by some contemporary documents. Mr. Matthew Collet, second in the English factory at Qāsimbāzār, wrote to the Council in Calcutta on the 22nd January, 1757:— "As to Alivardi Cawn's last dying speech to his nephew (? grandson) I look upon it as a specious fable". Mr. Richard Becher, Chief of the Company's factory at Dacca, remarked in his letter to the Council in Calcutta, dated the 25th January, 1757:— "Mr. Holwell will excuse me if I do not admit Alivardi Cawn's speech as genuine till better proofs are brought to support it than any I have yet seen. Such advice if really given, it is reasonable to imagine, had few or no witnesses so that it appears very improbable Mr. Holwell in his distressed situation at Muxadabad should have been able to unravel the mysteries of the Cabinet and explore a secret never yet known to

[1] *Bengal Past and Present*, July-Sept., 1915. Hill, II, 129 162, iii: 330.

any one but himself". Mr. Watts, Chief of the English Factory at Qāsimbāzār, wrote to the Court of Directors on the 30th January, 1757:—"The last dying speech of Mahābat Jung or Alivardi Cawn to his grandson neither he, or I believe any of the Gentlemen of the Factory, ever heard of; neither have I since heard from any of the country people; it seems an imitation of the speech of Louis XIV to his grandson, and appears, as Mr. Collet aptly terms it, only a specious fable". Instigated by the Afghan general Mustafa Khan, Alivardi's nephews, Shahāmat Jang and Saulat Jang, once proposed to him the expulsion of the English from Bengal. But the old Nawab did not support their proposal, and, after the departure of Mustafa Khan from his court, gave them a significant reply:—"Dear children! Mustafa Khan is a soldier of fortune, . . . He wishes that I should always have occasion to employ him and to put it in his power to ask favours for himself and his friends; but in the name of common sense, what is the matter with your own selves, that you should join issue with him, and make common cause of his opinion? What wrong have the English done, that I should wish them ill? Look at yonder plains; should you set fire to it, there would be no stopping its progress; and who is the man then who shall put out a fire that shall break forth at sea, and from thence come out upon land. Beware of lending an ear to such proposals again; for they will produce nothing but evil"[1]

Hindu officers in Alivardi's government

Alivardi could cleverly utilise the services of a few able Hindu officers in the task of administration. With a brilliant tradition of administrative capacity since the early days of Indian civilisation, the Hindus displayed a fine genius in the transaction of both civil and military affairs under successive governments like those of the Turko-Afghans, the Great Mughals, the later Mughals and the British.[2] Among the Hindu officers employed in Alivardi's government the most prominent were Jānkirām Shom, his son Durlabhrām, Rāmnārāin, Kiratchand, Ummid Ray, Biru Dutt, Rāmrām Singh and Gokulchand. Orme wrongly asserts that the Hindus discharged only civil functions. Ghulām Husain tells us that many of them were employed in the military service of Alivardi's government and helped

[1] *Siyar*, ii. 611.

[2] In some unpublished papers, discovered in the Record room of the District Judge of Patna, I find the names of many eminent Bengali Hindu officers being employed in the task of administering Bihar since the year 1790 A. D.

him greatly during his Orissa expedition and in subduing the Afghan rebels. The principal Hindu merchants and bankers were also attached to him. As a matter of fact, Hindu support was an important factor in his career.

But there remained at the same time an under-current of discontent among some Hindu zamindars, probably due to the *ābwābs* imposed on them. Colonel Scott, chief engineer of the Company, wrote to his friend Mr. Noble in 1754 that "the Jentue (Hindu) rajahs and the inhabitants were disaffected to the Moor (Muhammadan) government and secretly wished for a change and opportunity of throwing off their yoke". This discontent of the Hindu zamindars openly manifested itself in the time of Sirāj-ud-daulah, and their support and sympathy went to the English East India Company in Bengal.

Alivardi was no doubt a tactful governor, always solicitous for the welfare of his province. But his regime of sixteen years was not so brilliant as has been described by Ghulām Husain or Karam 'Ali, both of whom were indebted to him in several ways and naturally did not refer to the dark aspects of the period. A reflective student of history will not fail to note that, in spite of almost sleepless vigilance and care, Alivardi could not save his province altogether from the influence of the same disruptive forces which were then distracting the other parts of the decaying Mughal empire. Political troubles like the Maratha invasions, the Afghan rebellions, and the incursions of the Maghs from the Arakan side, disturbed the peace and order of Bengal and seriously affected the different departments of the economic life of its people.

Nevertheless, the period is instructive from two points of view. It shows that retribution follows crimes even in political circles, and thus an adventurer could not secure real peace, for himself or his family, from a position usurped by him through force and treachery. But it is at the same time significant to note that it was possible for a tactful and active governor like Alivardi to utilize profitably the services of officers belonging to both the Hindu and Muslim sects, in the task of administration, even when there were various discordant factors in the politics of the country.

CHAPTER XXIV

MARATHAS IN BENGAL

I. First Maratha invasion, 1742.

On his return journey from Katak, Alivardi Khan learned at Mubārak Manzil (now called *Shāhin-bāndi*) in the Ārāmbāgh subdivision of the Hughli district, and some 15 miles south of Bardwan, that a Maratha army from Nagpur had passed through Pachet and was raiding the Bardwan district. By a forced march he arrived at Bardwan, on the 15th April, 1742. Here, next morning he found himself encircled by the myriads of Deccan light horse. The Nawab's position was very critical, as he had only three thousand horsemen and a thousand more foot-musketeers with him, but was encumbered with all his baggage, camp followers and family, the main portion of his army having been earlier sent back to his capital. He was forced to halt a week in Bardwan. The Marathas cut off his grain supply, one party of them under Bhāskar Pandit keeping up the investment and another party plundering the country for forty miles around.

Driven by hunger, Alivardi attempted a break through the Maratha cordon in the north-eastern direction to Murshidabad, *via* Katwā, 35 miles from Bardwan. But the plan was mismanaged, as the camp followers whom he wanted to leave behind, crowded upon his troops in wild panic, and his march became a slow and disorderly movement. At last by four o'clock in the afternoon his advance was entirely stopped in a muddv rice field. His baggage and tents, coming up from behind were looted by the enemy hovering round, and his army had to halt there without food or shelter. A day and two nights passed in this way, and then on the 25th the Nawab cut his way through the Maratha line, with the help of his artillery and musketeers and the brave Afghan cavalry under Mustafa Khan. At Nigun Sarāi, 14 miles short of Katwā, a desperate rear-guard action was fought in which Musāhib Khan fell, but the starving army reached Katwā in safety on the 26th. During this retreat, whenever the Bengal army halted, the Marathas used to halt likewise, just beyond the range of the long muskets while their roving bands plundered and burnt the village for ten

miles on each side of the track. Provisions and reinforcements soon reached the Nawab at Katwā.

Mir Habib, a poor Persian pedlar from Shirāz, had made himself by his ability the right-hand man and deputy of Rustam Jang, the son-in-law of Shujā'-ud-din, and been raised to the peerage. He now joined the Marathas and guided their plans and operations with all his local knowledge, so as to wreak vengeance on Alivardi as the enemy of his patron. His extraordinary ability and implacable enmity to Alivardi Khan gave to the Maratha incursion into Bengal its long-drawn and murderous character.

Bhāskar Pandit, finding the Nawab safely escaped to Katwā, at first wanted to return to Nāgpur in order to avoid the rainy season of lower Bengal, But Mir Habib lured him with the prospect of boundless plunder, to make a sudden dash on the Nawab's capital, during his absence. With 700 select Maratha horsemen the raiding party in one night covered about forty miles and reached Dāhipārā, a suburb of Murshidabad (6th May 1742), burnt its bāzār, and then crossing over to Murshidabad itself plundered it for one day without any opposition, taking three lakhs of rupees from the house of the banker Jagat Seth alone. But Alivardi had hurried up on the heels of the Marathas and arrived to save his capital in the morning of the 7th. The raiders retreated to Katwā, a line of burning village marking their track.

From the month of June Katwā became the head quarters of a Maratha army of occupation. Mir Habib acted as their chief adviser and agent. Through his friends in Hughli, he secured that town and port for the Marathas by imprisoning its drunken faujdār, Muhammad Razā (early in July), and a Maratha garrison under Shesh Rao was put in there. Thus, the districts west of the Ganges passed into the hands of the invaders. "They set up outposts in many places and occupied the country from Rajmahal to Medinipur and Jalesar." Shesh Rao was installed as their governor. Unlike other Maratha chiefs he was polite, considerate to others, just and kind. His good administration soon won the landholders and even the European traders of these parts over to his side. Mir Habib acted as the diwan of Bengal on behalf of the Marathas and summoned the zamindars to pay him their land revenue."

The Nawab's rule ceased in West Bengal, but his authority was maintained east of the Ganges, though even there subjected to occasional raids. "All rich and respectable people abandoned their homes and migrated to the eastern side of the Ganges in order to save the honour of their women." (Salimullah).

II. The Maratha Terror In Bengal

Campaigns, September—December, 1742.

All over the country from which the Nawab's authority had disappeared, the roving Maratha bands committed wanton destruction and unspeakable outrage. An English factor reported in July 1742, " The Marathas are plundering in Birbhum, which has put a stop to all business, the merchants and weavers flying wherever they can." Another English merchant, Holwell, writes, "They committed the most horrid devastation and cruelties, fed their horses and cattle with mulberry plantations and thereby irreparably injured the silk manufacture. A general face of ruin succeeded: Many of the inhabitants, weavers and husbandmen, fled. The *ārangs* (silk and cloth factories and emporia) were in a great degree deserted; the lands untilled....The manufactures of the *ārangs* received so injurious a blow at this period, that they have ever since lost their original purity and estimation; and probably will never recover them again. Every evil attending destructive war, was felt by this unhappy country in the most eminent degree. A scarcity of grain in all parts; the wages of labour greatly enhanced; trade, foreign and inland, labouring under every disadvantage and oppression "[1].

Gangārām, an eye-witness, thus describes the sufferings of the people: "Every class of people took to flight with their property, ...when suddenly the *bargis*[2] came up and encircled them in the plain. They snatched away gold and silver, rejecting everything else. Of some people they cut off the hand, of some the nose and ears; some they killed outright. They dragged away the beautiful women.......The *bargis* after thus committing all sinful acts, set these women free. After looting in the open, they entered the villages and set fire to the houses......and roamed about on all sides plundering......They constantly shouted 'Give us rupees, give us rupees, give us rupees.' When they got no rupee, they filled their victims' nostrils with water, or drowned them in tanks....It was only after crossing the Bhāgirathi that the people found safety."

[1] Holwell, *Interesting Hist, Events*, 2nd ed. (1766), Part I. pp. 121-151. Also letters from Pondicherry to the Fr. Company, 11 Jan. 1746 and 31st Jan. 1747 (N. S.)

[2] *Bargis*, the name by which the Maratha raiders are known in Bengal, is a corruption of *bārgir*, meaning the lowest class of Maratha common soldiers whose arms and horses were supplied by the State, as contrasted with *silāh-dārs*, who owned their own horses and equipment.

Another eye-witness, Vāneshwar Vidyālankār, the Court pandit of the Maharajah of Bardwan writes, "Shāhu Rajah's troops are niggard of pity, slayers of pregnant women and infants, of Brāhmans and the poor, fierce of spirit, expert in robbing the property of every one and committing every kind of sinful act.... Their main strength lies in their marvellously swift horses. If it comes to a battle, they secretly decamp to some other country." The same tale is told by Salimullah in his *Tārikh-i-Bangāla* (written in 1763) and by the French merchants of Chandernagar and the English of Calcutta.

During the monsoon recess of 1742, both sides waited for reinforcements. Alivardi encamped outside his capital to guard it, and received two large contingents from Patnā and Purniā, while Bhāskar Pandit sent two captains to his master in Nāgpur to press for fresh troops, but he waited in vain. Alivardi decided to attack the Marathas before the drying of the roads and the fall of the river level would restore to the light Deccani horse its natural advantage. Bhāskar was celebrating the Durgā Pujā at Katwā, in the most lavish style with forced contributions from the zamindārs, when Alivardi after a wide detour at night by the north and west crossed the Ganges at Uddhāran-pur, some five miles above Katwā, and the Ajay river, a mile north of Katwā, by two boat-bridges which he had constructed with great secrecy and speed. Early in the morning of 27th September 1742 (the *Navami* or grand Puja day) two thousand and five hundred picked troops of the Nawab forming his van, immediately on reaching the south bank of the Ajay, formed and charged the sleeping Maratha camp. The surprise was complete; the Marathas fled away without striking a blow; there was little loss of life on either side, but the Marathas lost all their camp and baggage.

Bhāskar recalled his troops from all their outposts in Bengal, and led the fugitives into the Medinipur district, where he looted and burnt Rādhānagar (a famous silk-rearing centre) and other large places, and took post at Nārāyangarh. A detachment from this army captured Cuttack after slaying its governor Shaikh Ma'sum at Jājpur. But Alivardi marched in person against them and recovered Cuttack, driving the Marathas beyond the Chilkā lake (Dec. 1742). He returned to Murshidabad in triumph on 9th February, 1743.

III. SECOND MARATHA INVASION, 1743;

ALIVARDI'S PACT WITH THE PESHWA.

Early in March 1743, Raghuji Bhonslé, the Rajah of Nagpur, himself arrived at Katwā along with Bhāskar Pandit. He was bent upon exacting the *chauth* of Bengal, Bihar, and Orissa which the Mughal Emperor had promised to Rajah Shāhu, and Rajah Shāhu had assigned to Raghuji. But in the meantime the Delhi Emperor had appealed to the Peshwā Bālāji Rao, the rival and personal enemy of Raghuji Bhonslé, and the Peshwā had agreed in the preceding November to eject Raghuji from Bengal by force.

Early in February 1743, the Peshwā entered Bihar from the south with a strong force. His army was irresistible, and "along his route those who gave him blackmail or costly presents, saved their lives and property, while those who attempted defence were killed and their houses were given up to plunder." From Benares, he traversed Bihar by way of Saseram, Dāudnagar, Tikāri, Gayā, Mānpur, Bihār city and Mungir, and then issuing through the hills and jungles of the Santal Paraganas on to the plain of Birbhum, took the road to Murshidabad. After oaths of fidelity and friendship had been exchanged between the two, Alivardi met the Peshwā at the village of Chauria-gāchi (on the west bank of the Bhāgirathi some 10 miles south of Berhampur Cantonment) on 30th March. It was agreed at this conference that the Nawab would pay the *chauth* of Bengal to Shāhu Rajah, besides 22 lakhs of rupees to Bālāji for the expenses of his army, while the Peshwā undertook to effect a final settlement with Raghuji who would not trouble Bengal in future.

Raghuji Bhonslé on hearing of these two allies advancing together against him, decamped from Katwā to Birbhum. Leaving the slow Bengal army behind, the Peshwā made a rapid cavalry dash, overtook Raghuji on 10th April and drove him away into the western hills with heavy loss of men and baggage. As Raghuji passed through Mānbhum and took the road to Sambalpur, the Peshwā after passing through Pachet, gave up the chase and set out for his return to Punā.

The celebrated Maratha Ditch of Calcutta was dug during this year, to protect the exposed part of the town, at a cost of Rs. 25,000 raised by the local merchants. A mud wall was also raised round Patnā city by its governor. The nine months from June 1743 to February 1744 passed in peace in these eastern provinces.

IV. Third Maratha Incursion, 1744.

At the beginning of March 1744, Bhāskar Pandit again invaded Bengal by way of Orissa and Medinipur. He was furious at losing all the spoils of his raids in the two previous years, and his disappointment was heightened by the knowledge that his master's rival the Peshwā had cleared twenty-two lakhs of rupees easily by a short campaign in Bengal. The sufferings of the innocent people who came in his way were worse than anything undergone by them before.

Alivardi was utterly bewildered by this revival of the Maratha menace. He had paid Bālāji Rao twenty-two lakhs of rupees for insuring Bengal against all the *Bargi* raids in future, and there were those human locusts back again after nine months. The reason was that in the meanwhile these two Maratha chiefs had met together at their king's Court and Shāhu had imposed upon them a compromise dated 31st August 1743, by which the portion of Bihar lying west of Patnā and including Shāhābād and Tikāri and yielding 12 lakhs of rupees a year was assigned to the Peshwā, while Raghuji was to enjoy Bengal, Orissa, and the portion of Bihar east of Patnā, and each was strictly forbidden to interfere with the other's sphere of influence.

The Nawab therefore found that in return for all his expenditure he had got not an assured protector, but only two blood-suckers instead of one. His own situation was well nigh desperate. The invasions of the past two years had halved his income and doubled his army expenses, while his coffers had been exhausted by the heavy tribute that he had to pay to the Delhi Emperor on his own succession and the subsidy exacted by Bālāji Rao in 1743. His Government was bankrupt; his soldiers were worn out by the fatigue of campaigning year after year; he himself was in poor health and unable to take the field. Therefore, a new campaign against the elusive Marathas in the fierce summer heat just then beginning, had to be avoided by all means.

The best means that suggested itself to his mind was treacherous assassination, which he had practised before with success against the Rajah of the Chakwār tribe. (Holwell, i. 69-71.).

Advised by his leading Afghan captain Ghulām Mustafā Khan and assisted by the perjured oaths of his supple Hindu diwan Jānkirām, he invited Bhāskar Pandit and his captains to an interview with him for making a peaceful settlement of the question of the *chauth* of Bengal. The meeting was to take place in a huge tent set up at Mānkarā, four miles south of the modern Berhampur Cantonment

station, and the date was the 31st of March 1744. On entering the tent, the unsuspecting Maratha general and 21 of his captains were all massacred by assassins hidden in the double side-screens. Only one captain, Raghuji Gaikwar, who had remained behind on the plea of illness, galloped away with the troops, and all the Maratha detachments vacated Bengal and Orissa.

This political crime gave the three eastern provinces peace and prosperity for fifteen months. The Rajah of Nāgpur was in no position to avenge the murder of his generals immediately; his money difficulties had grown worse than before, and his old friction with the Peshwā had recurred in many a quarter because each was violating the compromise of August 1743. The Bengal adventure had only added to the Bhonslé's load of debt.

But Alivardi's Government too was at its wits' end for money. The annual raids had destroyed the resources of the province, while his army bill for defence had been more than doubled and now amounted to one kror and eighty lakhs of rupees a year. So, he was driven to raise money by any means, fair or foul.

In his financial distress Alivardi put pressure upon the European Companies trading in Bengal. He complained that the English "carried on the trade of the whole world; they formerly used to have but four or five ships, but now brought 40 or 50 sails which belong not to the Company." He expected the rich merchants and refugees in Calcutta to assist him with a large war contribution for meeting his army bill. The English at last settled his claim by paying 3½ lakhs of rupees, besides Rs. 43,500 for his courtiers. The French at Chandernagar paid Rs. 45,000.

V. Afghan Mutiny, 1745; Raghuji Returns.

A domestic revolution next year turned Alivardi's strongest allies into his bitterest enemies, and so weakened the defence of Bengal as to tempt the Marathas to return. The army of the Nawab of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa in the 18th century was filled entirely with Afghans (mostly from Bihar and even Mewat) and Hindu foot-musketeers from Buxar, with some Oudh men. Of these the Afghans were the most numerous and efficient element. Their supreme leader was Ghulām Mustafā Khan, who had hitherto been Alivardi's right-hand man, and they numbered 9,000 cavalry and a smaller body of infantry. Alivardi had promised Mustafā the governorship of Bihar as his reward if he could carry out the massacre of Bhāskar and the other Maratha generals. But as the

Nawab showed no sign of keeping his word, Mustafā began to threaten him. An armed conflict in the capital seemed imminent; but Alivardi seduced some of the other Afghan captains and even a few of the lieutenants of Mustafā. That general at last resigned the Nawab's service, and left Murshidabad with his own contingent in February 1745, on his dues being paid up in full.

Entering Bihar, the revolted general stormed Monghyr fort and delivered an assault on Patnā city on 14th March. His army was now swollen to 14,000 troopers by adventurers from all sides joining such a noted freelance. Zainuddin Ahmad Khan, the son-in-law of Alivardi, defended the capital of Bihar, and at first all seemed lost for him when a musket-shot killed Mustafā's elephant-driver, and that general leaped down from its back. His followers took this to be a sign of his death and they broke and fled away. Patnā was saved. Despairing of success against the fort, Mustafā, withdrew from its walls on 21st March, and retreated to the Shāhābād district. Alivardi soon came up from Bengal and chased the rebel out of Bihar to Chunār, (April).

But in the meantime Raghuji Bhonslé had invaded Bengal at the invitation of Mustafā Khan, and Alivardi had to hasten back to that province. Seizing this opportunity, Mustafā Khan came out of his refuge in Oudh territory, and entered the zamindāri of Udwant Singh Ujjainiā, the owner of Jagadishpur (in Shāhābād) who had long been the enemy of the governors of Bihar. But Zainuddin promptly issued from Patnā, and on 20th June attacked the Afghan army at Karhani (12 miles S. W. of Koilwār on the Son river). Here Mustafā was shot dead and his army fled away to the village of Magror under Mustafā's son Murtaza Khan.

In the meantime, Raghuji Bhonslé had invaded Orissa, and captured Cuttack with its governor Durlabhrām, the son of the diwan Jānkirām. All Orissa up to Medinipur passed into the hands of the Marathas (April). After some fruitless negotiations for terms, Raghuji entered the Bardwan district, where he seized seven lakhs of revenue, and passed into Birbhum to canton for the rainy season, while Alivardi personally guarded Murshidabad.

In September, Raghuji passed into Bihar, plundering on the way. After fording the Son river, he marched to Magror where he was joined by the remnant of Mustafā Khan's army. He had now 10,000 Maratha light horse and 4,000 Afghan soldiers under him. Looting Bhojpur on the way, he moved on towards Patnā, till he came upon the Nawab's army led by Alivardi himself at the Rāni's tank near Muhib-Alipur. The Bengal vanguard led by Mir Ja'far surprised the Maratha Rajah in his camp, but the latter escaped.

A running fight continued for some days (14-20 Nov. 1745), but the Nawab had to halt for some days to refresh his exhausted troops.

Then, the Marathas led by Mir Habib, doubled back towards Bengal to seize the chance of looting its now-defenceless capital. Alivardi followed close on their heels, his army suffering terrible privations as the Marathas had looted and destroyed all the food supply along their track.

Following the shorter jungle path, Raghuji appeared before Murshidabad on 21st December 1745. Alivardi arrived there the next day. Then Raghuji fell back on Katwā, but at the Rāni's Tank west of that town, he was defeated after a severe battle and driven away with heavy loss of men and half their baggage. But while Raghuji himself returned to Nagpur, Mir Habib remained in the camp of Katwā with some 2500 Maratha horse and 4000 Afghans. The Nawab and his soldiers alike were worn out by their two hard campaigns and forced marches in Bihar during the last nine months, and had to halt in Murshidabad. In April 1746, however, he set out again and drove the invaders out of Bengal into Orissa, after which Bengal and Bihar enjoyed peace for a time.

But the Nawab's Afghan captains, Shamsher Khan and Sardār Khan, commanding between them 6000 Afghans, were found to have been conspiring with the Marathas for overthrowing Alivardi's rule, and sharing the three provinces with Raghuji. So, the Nawab dismissed them in June and ordered them to go back to their homes in the Darbhāngā district.

VI. Alivardi's Policy Towards the Maratha Demands

In October 1746, the Delhi Emperor made a settlement with the Maratha king's envoy, promising to order the payment of 25 and 10 lakhs of rupees annually to Rajah Shāhu as the *chauth* of Bengal and Bihar respectively. Alivardi rightly argued that this payment could be justified only if Shāhu in return for this money effectually kept Raghuji Bhonslé out of Bengal, and not merely ordered his Peshwa to expel Raghuji after Bengal had been raided. As he wrote to the Maratha agent in Delhi, "Raghuji is Rajah Shāhu's servant; now call him back and restrain him. When a man like the Peshwā himself is apprehensive that Raghuji might again invade Bengal, how can I be expected to disband my army and hope to see my country cultivated again? . . . The districts on the (western) bank of the Ganges have been devastated and not a *kauri* is being collected there. If some five rupees are realised from this side (the eastern

bank), it has to be spent on my troops. Whence can a revenue come for being sent (to Delhi)? In this state of things, if the Bhonslé army does not make any incursion this year, then at the end of the year I shall disband my levies and whatever revenue is left (after paying them off) I shall send to the Emperor......Therefore, I am determined to remain prepared for war."

In short, Alivardi chose the wiser and manlier part of basing the defence of his realm on a strong army under his own control, instead of depending upon a protective force, maintained at his cost, to be sent out by the Peshwā for defending him in the event of Raghuji's invasion, probably after half the province had been desolated and his subjects kept in perpetual alarm by the manifestly defenceless condition of their ruler. He refused to pay a *chauth* for Bihar (ten lakhs) to the Peshwā separately, when there was no guarantee that Bālāji Rāo on being satisfied as to his own share and the safety of Bihar, would not leave Raghuji a free hand to raid and tax Bengal and Orissa, instead of defending the three eastern provinces together,—which was the Emperor's object in promising 35 lakhs to Rajah Shāhu. The blackmail for the entire north-eastern region must be one charge payable to one authority, and not two separate amounts payable to two mutually independent enemy chiefs.

Alivardi's campaign for the recovery of Orissa from Mir Habib could not start before the end of 1746, as he had to wait for new levies to replace the recently dismissed Afghan contingents of Shamsher Khan and Sardār Khan. At last in November, his general Mir Ja'far, at the head of about 7500 men, marched into the Medinipur district, and about 12th December, defeated Habib's lieutenant Sayyid Nur in a decisive battle near Medinipur town. But Mir Habib came up from the south of Balesar (about 20th January, 1747) and was soon afterwards joined by a Maratha force under Jānoji Bhonslé (the son of Raghuji) from Nāgpur *via* Cuttack. At the news of this junction of his enemies, Mir Ja'far fled precipitately back to Bardwan, abandoning the Medinipur district. Soon afterwarls, a conspiracy between Mir Ja'far and 'Ataullah (the faujdār of Rajmahal) to murder their benefactor and kinsman Alivardi, was discovered and the two were dismissed. (*Siyar*, ii. 157).

Nothing daunted by these losses, Alivardi, now an old man of seventy-one, marched out of his camp at Āmāniganj and defeated Jānoji in a severely contested battle near Bardwan (March 1747). The baffled raiders fled back to Medinipur and the Murshidabad and Bardwan districts were cleared of them, while the Nawab re-

turned to his capital for the rainy season. During the whole of this year 1747, the Marathas remained in undisturbed possession of Orissa up to Medinipur.

VII. Afghans Seize Bihar Government.

At the beginning of the next year (1748) a terrible storm burst upon the Mughal Empire and most tragically on Bengal-Bihar. Ahmad Shāh Durrāni, the heir to Nādir Shāh's power and army, invaded the Panjab, while the Afghan ex-soldiers of Alivardi advanced from their homes in the Darbhāngā district in North Bihar, took Patnā City, and treacherously murdered its governor Zain-ud-din Ahmad (surnamed Haibat Jang), the son-in-law of Alivardi (13th January, 1748). The Nawab's elder brother Hāji Ahmad (the father of Haibat Jang) was tortured to death to make him divulge the hiding place of his treasure, and Alivardi's widowed daughter and her children were dragged into Afghan captivity. For three months (13 January—16 April), Bihar tasted Afghan rule. Afghan tribesmen from all sides flocked to Shamsher Khan's standard, "they swarmed out of the ground like white ants",—hoping to restore their lost tribal empire in India.

On hearing the tragic news from Patnā, Alivardi marched out of Āmāniganj (Murshidabad) on 29th February for Bihar. Near Bhāgalpur he defeated a Maratha force under Mir Habib who was hastening from Orissa to join the rebel Afghans. At Kālā Diārā (or Rāni Sarāi) on the south bank of the Ganges, 26 miles east of Patnā, the Nawab crushed the Afghans and their Maratha allies, on 16th April, and soon afterwards recovered Patna, released his captive daughter, and restored his own government in the province of Bihar. Then he returned to Murshidabad on 30th November. For a whole year (April 1748—March 1749) Bengal and Bihar enjoyed a respite from the *bargi* visitation; but all Orissa from Medinipur southwards remained in the hands of the Marathas.

VIII. Last Struggles With The Marathas.

In March 1749, Alivardi set out for reconquering Orissa. At the news of his approach, Mir Habib set fire to his encampment near Medinipur and fled southwards. Fighting a few light skirmishes only, as the enemy constantly fled further and further, the Nawab reached Cuttack on 17th May, 1749. The fort of Bārābāti capitulated to him a month later, and thus the reconquest of Orissa

was completed. But no Bengal noble would agree to accept the governorship of Orissa, such was their terror of the Maratha power and despair at their own military weakness. The worthless man who was at last left in charge of Cuttack by Alivardi was defeated and captured by the Marathas under Mir Habib only a week after Alivardi had marched out of that city, (June 1749). After undergoing terrible privations and hardships owing to the bad roads and flooded rivers during the monsoon, Alivardi reached Murshidabad at the beginning of July,—his work in Orissa entirely undone and his health broken down.

A long illness disabled him till the middle of October; thereafter he marched to Medinipur and formed a permanent encampment there in order to close the path of Maratha raids from Orissa into Bengal. Here his attempt to prevent frauds in his military accounts almost caused another mutiny among his captains. At the end of February 1750 the Marathas resumed their raids into Bengal. On 6th March Mir Habib arrived near Murshidabad and plundered the country round. So, Alivardi quickly fell back from Medinipur to Bardwan, the raiders disappeared into the jungles of West Bengal, and the Nawab returned to Medinipur (April), where he built permanent quarters for himself in order to guard that frontier post.

But in June 1750 a mad attempt of his spoilt grandson, the boy Siraj-ud-daulah to seize the government of Patnā which his murdered father Haibat Jang had held before, sent Alivardi hurrying to Bihar in tropical rain and heat, and at Patnā the old Nawab fell seriously ill. He returned to Murshidabad by boat, under medical treatment (September.) But there was to be no rest for him. At Medinipur his agents Mir Ja'far and Rajah Durlabhrām were in such mortal terror of the Marathas, that Alivardi, though far from restored to normal health, had to go there in person (December) and fight and drive away Mir Habib. He then returned to Katwā in February, 1751.

IX. Peace Treaty; Orissa Ceded.

Both sides were now eager for peace. Mir Habib had gained nothing from the barren province of Orissa in these years and his raids into Bengal had been always foiled by Alivardi's vigilance and vigour. Alivardi himself was now 75 years old and felt the weight of age and many years of hard campaigning. His troops were thoroughly worn out and his treasury exhausted. So, after negotiations with Maratha agents the terms were settled; the draft treaty

was approved by the Court of Nāgpur, and finally in May 1751, a peace was signed on the following conditions :

1. Mir Habib would now become a servant of Alivardi and act as deputy-governor (*nāib-nāzim*) of Orissa on his behalf. He should pay the surplus revenue of the province to Raghuji's army as their salary.

2. From the Bengal revenue twelve lakhs of rupees annually would be paid to Raghuji as the *chauth* of that province.

3. The Maratha Government agreed not to set foot in Alivardi's dominions again. The frontier of Bengal was fixed at and including the river Suvarna-rekhā near Jalesar, and the Marathas bound themselves not to cross it again. (Thus the southern part of the district of Medinipur was finally joined to Bengal.)

A year after the conclusion of this treaty, Mir Habib was murdered by the Maratha troops of Jānoji (24 August 1752.) Mir Habib's post as deputy governor of Orissa was given to Musālih-ud-din Md. Khan, a courtier of Raghuji; Alivardi lost even his theoretical control over Orissa, and it became a Maratha province in deed, though according the theory of the treaty it was to be held as a vast *jāgir* whose revenue alone was assigned to the Marathas, without any change in its territorial sovereignty.

The loss of Orissa to the Mughal empire was the one permanent result of the Maratha invasions. Another was that the *Bargis* showed the way for the organised looting of Bengal and Bihar to the Upper India robber bands calling themselves *sannyāsis* and
selves not to cross it again. (Thus the southern part of the district of Medinipur was finally joined to Bengal.)

CHAPTER XXV.

SIRĀJ-UD-DAULAH.

I. Sirāj-ud-daulah, his position and character

Alivardi sank into the grave in the midst of darkness and despair. His long years of striving with the Marathas had ended in his admission of utter defeat. And now as he entered his eighty-second year, with a constitution worn out by many years of hard campaigning, death dealt a quick succession of blows at his heart; in the course of one year he lost two sons-in-law and one grandson, leaving two immature youths as his only possible successors. Alivardi had no son, but three daughters only. They had been married to the three sons of his brother the Hāji, who were known from their seats of governorship, as the Dacca Nawāb, the Purniā Nawāb, and the Pātnā Nawāb. All his three daughters had been widowed in his life time. The eldest Mihir-un-nisā (Ghasiti Begam) was childless. The second (she of Purnia) had a grown up son named Shaukat Jang and a boy named Mirza Ramzāni. The third (Āminā Begam) had two sons left, Sirāj-ud-daulah, and Mirzā Mahdi.

Sirāj was his grandfather's darling, because he was born just before Alivardi gained the deputy governorship of Bihar (1733) which was for him the stepping-stone to the throne of these three eastern subahs. His family regarded this new-born child as the bringer of good fortune to the beggarly adventurer from Persia who had started life in Orissa on a monthly pay of Rs. 100 and ended by becoming the master of three kingdoms.

His grandfather's superstitious affection proved a fatal boon for Sirāj-ud-daulah; it led him through a riotous life to a tragic and dishonoured end. He was given no education for his future duties; he never learnt to curb his passionate impulses; none durst correct his vices; and he was kept away from manly and martial exercises as dangerous to such a precious life. Thus the apple of old Alivardi's eye grew up into a most dissolute, haughty, reckless and cowardly youth, and the prospect of his succession to the government of Bengal, filled all people with alarm.

About the character of Sirāj-ud-daulah the evidence of the English merchants of Calcutta or that of the famous Patna historian Sayyid Ghulām Husain (the tutor of his rival Shaukat Jang) might

be suspected as prejudiced. I shall therefore give here the opinion of Monsieur Jean Law, the chief of the French factory at Qāsimbāzār, a gentleman who was prepared to risk his own life in order to defend Sirāj against the English troops. Law writes in his Memoirs,[1]—

"The character of Sirāj-ud-daulah was reputed to be one of the worst ever known. In fact he had distinguished himself not only by all sorts of debaucheries, but by a revolting cruelty. The Hindu women are accustomed to bathe on the bank of the Ganges. Sirāj-ud-daulah, who was informed by his spies which of them were beautiful, sent his satellites in little boats to carry them off. He was often seen, in the season when the river overflows, causing the ferry boats to be upset or sunk, in order to have the cruel pleasure of seeing the confusion of a hundred people at a time, men, women and children, of whom many, not being able to swim, were sure to perish . . . Every one trembled at the name of Sirāj-ud-daulah ".

On the eve of Alivardi's death Sirāj and his cousin Shaukat Jang stood face to face as rivals for the throne of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa. But Shaukat Jang lived far away, in Purnia. Siraj's nearest and greatest enemy was his mother's eldest sister Ghasiti Begam, a childless widow. As the best-loved and most domineering daughter of Alivardi, she had used her position of influence to amass a vast fortune, which she kept with herself, in a castle surrounded by a lake called the Moti-jhil, a few miles north of the city of Murshidabad, guarded by her armed retainers, as a threat to the ruler in the capital. But she was a woman, unble to come into the field in person. Hence she had to act through male agents, such as her lovers and managers. It had been her ambition to raise Sirāj's younger brother Akrām-ud-daulah to the throne, and rule the country as his regent from behind the veil; but that boy had died about a year before Alivardi. She then turned her eyes on Shaukat Jang and invited him to invade Murshidabad. Thus every enemy of Sirāj found a patron in Ghasiti Begam. In fact, the approaching death of Alivardi threatened to provoke a war of succession, which did not turn out so terrible as the war for Aurangzib's throne 50 years earlier only because the claimants were two worthless youths. But the most formidable enemy of Sirāj was Mir Ja'far Ali Khan, the commander-in-chief of Alivardi's army. By reason of his mature age, experience of war, and official position, he was the only man whom Sirāj had reason to dread in a trial of strength: Ja'far Ali had come to India as a penniless adventurer like his master, but Alivardi had given him the hand of his half-sister (Shāh Khānam), and

[1] Tr. in Hill, iii. 162.

gradually raised him to a position next only to himself, as the *Bakhshi* (literally meaning the Paymaster-General, but really the Captain-General of the Forces.) Ja'far Ali had gained an undeserved reputation for valour by the rapid march which enabled him to rescue Saulat Jang near Katak before his defeated and fleeing captors could murder him (1741), and later by a victory over the Marathas in 1746 (Ch. 24, Sec. 7). But his courage entirely oozed out when in February, 1747, he was ordered to make a stand against the Marāthas at Medinipur, but fell precipitately back on Bardwan. The soldiers had no confidence in a general with such a record. Worst of all, he was so ungrateful as to conspire for the overthrow and murder of that Alivardi, who had raised him from the dust to the second position in the realm. If Alivardi could kill his benefactor Shujā'-ud-din's heir and seize the throne, Ja'far Ali had the same moral right to kill Alivardi (or his heir) and take the throne; that was his argument. Sunk in gross sensual pleasures and weakened by his addiction to opium and the hemp drug (*bhang*), he had not even the energy of Alivardi, who was twenty years older in age. In his last years, in the ignominious repose of the throne of Bengal, as "Lord Clive's jack-ass", he developed leprosy,—a loathsome end to a loathsome life.

Thus Sirāj-ud-daulah came to his long-assigned throne in a house divided against itself, with a hostile faction in the army and a disaffected subject population.

His first task was to disarm Ghasiti Begam by robbing her of her wealth, which was the only source of her strength and influence. Immediately after his accession, he sent a party of soldiers to seize the Moti-jhil pālace and its hoarded wealth. Ghasiti Begam had planned resistance, but her lover and captain Nazar Ali fled away, her house was occupied without a blow, and its treasure removed to Sirāj's palace in Mansurganj. She herself was insulted and placed in confinement.

The new Nawāb made a change of officers, placing his own partisans in the important posts. The selfish traitor Mir Ja'far was removed from the supreme headship of the army (*bakhshi*) and the post given to the brave and devoted Mir Madan. Another faithful and capable officer was Mohan Lal, the Kashmiri, whom he made *peshkār* of his diwān-khānah, with the title of Maharajah, and a degree of influence which turned him in effect into the prime minister. (April 1756).

Next month, Sirāj started for Purniā, whose governor Shaukat Jang had refused to acknowledge Sirāj's succession and was known to be intriguing with the Nawāb's enemies. On the way, at Rāj-

mahal, about 22nd May he received a dutiful message from Shaukat Jang and recalled the expeditionary troops in order to deal with a danger in his rear. This was the defiance of the English merchants of Calcutta.

II. Siraj-ud-daulah attacks Calcutta, June 1756.

The causes of Sirāj's rupture with the English can be now clearly known from the published records and correspondence. First, Mr. Roger Drake, the Chief of their Bengal factories had not followed the usual practice of congratulating him on his accession with a suitable present, as a foreign nation living in the land is bound to do. Secondly, in Alivardi's time when Sirāj had wished to visit the country-house of the English near Qāsimbāzār, the factors had refused to admit him, as it was very likely that the drunken disorderly youth would have damaged and defiled it. But the provoking cause was the question of arresting a fugitive harboured in Calcutta, Krishna Ballav, the son of Rāj Ballav.

Shahāmat Jang (the eldest son-in-law of Alivardi) had been the governor of Dacca for many years before his death (in Dec. 1755.) Being a sickly imbecile, he had left the management of his affairs to his wife Ghasiti Begam and her favourite Husain Quli Khan. Sirāj, who envied the wealth and power of Husain Quli, accused him of planning to take his life, and as an alleged precaution in self-defence, one day entered Alivardi's darbār with his armed retainers carrying lighted matches for their muskets. The doting old Nawāb pacified his darling grandson as best he could, and (according to Yusuf Ali) advised him to get rid of his enemy in a less crowded place. So, Sirāj caused Husain Quli to be murdered in the streets of Murshidabad (probably about April 1754). The dead man was succeeded as the Dacca Nawāb's deputy by Rāj Ballav, a Vaidya of Vikrampur, who had made a name for efficient and economical administration as superintendent of the Bengal fleet establishment, for the maintenance of which 14 lakhs of rupees a year were assigned. He now became all-in-all at Dacca and the chief agent for Ghasiti Begam's affairs. As soon as Shahāmat Jang was dead, Sirāj brought against Rāj Ballav the charge of having embezzled public money and called for an account of his administration of the Dacca finances. The charge had a plausible look, because both after Mir Jumla's death and in the early years of Murshid Quli Khan, the administrators of the jāgirs of the Bengal army and navy

were known to have peculated their collections. Rāj Ballav who happened to be in Murshidabad at the time, was thrown into confinement (March 1756), and Alivardi, who was then on his death bed, just managed to postpone the beheading of the Dacca diwān pending the auditing of his accounts. But men were sent to Dacca to attach Rāj Ballav's property and family. Krishna Ballav (the son of Rāj Ballav) with the women and treasures of the family escaped to Calcutta, on the pretext of a pilgrimage to Jagannāth. He arrived there on 13th March 1756 and by bribing Mr. Drake the governor secured an asylum. Sirāj-ud-daulah naturally objected to his subject under trial being harboured, in defiance of his authority, in a place within his realm. He sent Nārāyan Dās, (the brother of the chief of his Intelligence department) to Mr. Drake with a letter demanding the surrender of Krishna Ballav, and with instructions to spy out the unauthorized fortifications then going on in Calcutta. Nārāyan Dās entered the town in disguise, and when he was brought before the Calcutta Council, he could produce no diplomatic credentials. So he was at once turned out of the settlement as a spy, (16 April).

Besides Sirāj's personal grievances against the English, there was a more serious threat to the Nawab's power, namely the new fortifications being built at Calcutta. Early in this year the European factories in Bengal received a warning from their head offices at Home of the probability of a war soon breaking out between England and France. (The Seven Years' War actually began in Europe in May 1756.) The English immediately set themselves to repairing their long-dilapidated defences on the river side (west of the present General Post Office), cleaning the half-choked Marātha Ditch, and throwing up some earth-works in the northern environs (especially a redoubt and a draw-bridge, called Perring's Redoubt, across the Ditch at Baghbazar.) This was a clear violation of the terms under which the Mughal Government had allowed them to live in Bengal. Alivardi, justly alarmed by Bussy's ascendancy over the Muslim Powers of the Deccan, had persistently refused to allow the Europeans to fortify or arm their factories in Bengal, telling them, "You are merchants, what need have you of a fortress? Being under my protection you have no enemies to fear." Therefore, Sirāj had sent a spy to find out the unauthorised fortifications and armament of Calcutta, but this agent had been summarily ejected from the settlement by the governor's peons.[1]

[1] S. C. Hill calls the Nawāb's grievances against the English as "pretexts for war", but admits: (1) "As regards fortifications, it is quite clear that the

The Nawab had set out from Murshidabad on 16th May for suppressing Shaukat Jang; on the way at Rājmahal he received on the 20th, news of the disgrace of his messengers by Governor Drake, and immediately decided to settle accounts with the English before turning to the Purniā Nawāb.

The Qāsimbāzār factory of the English was invested by the Nawāb's troops on 24th May, and the Englishmen were made prisoners in violation of a solemn promise, when visiting the Nawab some days later. A few of the factors escaped to their friends' houses. The factory was occupied and looted.

On 5th June the Nawāb started for the invasion of Calcutta, and using unexpected promptitude, covered 160 miles in eleven days and arrived outside Calcutta on the 16th of June.

Calcutta was practically in a defenceless condition, when attacked by big artillery served by French deserters and Indo-Portuguese mercenaries. The European portion of the garrison consisted of 70 sick in hospital, 25 absent up-country, and only 180 men available for duty,—of whom the majority were Portuguese. To these must be added 250 men of the militia, consisting of 100 Europeans (mostly withdrawn from the ships) and 150 Armenians and half-castes (Indo-Portuguese.) The commanding officer Captain Minchin and his second in command were extremely incompetent leaders, in whom their men had no confidence. "The guns they had were old and neglected, and very few of them mounted, . . . on the shaky walls . . . Most of the powder had become damp and was useless."[1]

III. Fall of Calcutta

On 16th June, an attempt of the Nawāb's army to force the Marātha Ditch over the Chitpur bridge by attacking Perring's Redoubt which covered it, was foiled. But the Thānā fort (near

British (in Calcutta) had exceeded their rights . . . (2) As regards the abuse of trade privileges, it must be confessed that the British had used the *dastaks* or passes for goods free of custom in a way never contemplated by the *farmāns* ... (3) Concerning the protection given to the servants of the native Government, ... the case of Krishna Dās. ... the English had no right to shelter the servants of Government from the authorities in their own country.—It will be seen, therefore, that Sirāj-ud-daulah had a show of reason in all the pretexts he alleged for his attack on the British." (Vol i. liv—lvi.)

[1] On 11th June Mr. Drake found that he had at his disposal 180 soldiers (of whom only 40 were Europeans), 50 European volunteers, 60 European militia, 150 Armenian and Portuguese militia, 35 European artillery men, 40 volunteers, from the shipping,—in all 515 men. (Hill, I, lxx.)

Matiāburuz) after being taken by the British fleet could not be held for lack of men. Meantime, many of the Nawāb's troops and the looters who hung in the rear of the army, flocked into the town by fording the Ditch. Sirāj himself took up his quarters in Amir Chand's garden, in the quarter known as Simla.

The Black Town or Indian quarter of Calcutta in the north consisted almost entirely of bamboo and straw huts. The English decided to defend only the European quarter, (Dalhousie Square and east and south), and first "set on fire the straw-houses within the Lines of defence, to clear the Town as much as possible. The fire spread, and did much damage," (c. 14th). Again, in the night of the 16th, they set fire to part of the town in order to drive out the Nawāb's men. Next day, the British destroyed all the native houses to the eastward and the southward, and the Nawāb's plunderers set fire to the Great Bazar, (the old Bara Bazar, north of the modern Fairlie Place) and other parts of the Black Town, which burnt till morning. "All the British women were brought into the Fort on the 16th, and next day the Portuguese and Armenian women and children crowded into the Fort, (their relatives) the militia declaring that they would not fight unless their families were admitted." Everything in the Fort was thrown into confusion. All the peons and servants of the Europeans, the porters of munitions and gun laskars fled away in fear, till the British defenders began to starve for want of men to cook their meals.

The attack on the line of defence began on 18th June. The English prepared for it by a Council order to their soldiers "to give no quarter, as the Fort prison was already crowded." The Nawab's main attack was made on the defences from the east and south (Bowbazar Street Sealdah side, and Esplanade East.) By occupying the strongly built and scattered European houses in these directions, the invaders by their fire drove out the small bodies of the advanced English defenders and rendered the artillery of the Fort ineffective; and even the batteries outside the Fort had to be abandoned to the enemy.

So the English fell back into a smaller and inner line of defence, covering the old Fort William and a few yards around it (*i. e.,* from Fairlie Place to the southern limit of the General Post Office, and from the Ganges to Dalhousie Square West.)

In the night of the 18th as many women in the Fort as could be accommodated on board were sent to the ships. "The defenders of the Fort were now wearied out . . . The men at the outposts were left to starve as there were no cooks . . . The supply of ammunition

had run short." So, between 1 and 2 o' clock in the morning of 19th June, Mr. Drake "held an informal Council . . . It was determined to abandon the Fort, but how or when to make the retreat could not be decided upon."

The 19th was a day of increasing confusion and agony. The ships alongside Calcutta, on which the hope of a safe evacuation depended, dropped down the stream. On shore the Armenians and Portuguese half-breeds who formed the militia, were too terrified to act. Even the pure European soldiers could be persuaded with difficulty to resume their arms. But on learning that all the remaining powder was damp and useless, a stampede ensued for the boats. The governor Drake and the commandant Minchin themselves escaped in the last few boats. Some of the ships[1] ran aground and their inmates were made prisoners by the Nawāb's troops. The ships that escaped "set ashore all the refugees on board who had no connection with the Europeans" and then anchored at Falta, (26 June).

Calcutta, thus deserted by its governor and military commander, had still 170 white men capable of conducting its defence, (not counting the unreliable Armenians and Eurasians). They held a council, suspended their two fugitive heads, and appointed Mr. J. Z. Holwell, the zamindar or magistrate-collector of native Calcutta as governor and military commander, (in the afternoon of the 19th). Holwell tried to make a stand, but the enemy's musketry from the European houses they occupied took a heavy toll and made it almost impossible to stand upon the ramparts of the invested Fort. This night saw all the houses around burning. The British soldiers now refused to obey their officers, broke open the houses of the runaway members, and made themselves drunk with the liquor found there.

Sunday 20th June began in utter hopelessness. In the night before, 53 soldiers (chiefly Dutch) out of the small white contingent left had deserted to the enemy. In the fighting from morning to noon, the English lost 25 men killed and 70 wounded, and only 14 men were left to serve the guns, with no laskar or porter. Holwell, "hoping to amuse the enemy till nightfall, when a retreat might be effected, . . . hoisted a flag of truce." But about 4 o'clock in the evening, the enemy scaled the walls from all sides and the little river-gate of the Fort was burst open by a Dutch sergeant and delivered to the enemy. Some of the defenders were cut down, but Holwell now surrendered, the fighting ceased, and Sirāj-ud-daulah

[1] *The Prince George, Neptune, Calcutta,* and *Diligence.*

entered Calcutta as victor. But there was no arrest of prisoners; "the Portuguese and Armenians were allowed to go free and disappeared, and several of the Europeans simply walked out of the Fort, making their escape, to Hugli or the ships at Surman's garden."

IV. THE BLACK HOLE TRAGEDY

That Sunday evening, the British who had surrendered were well treated. Their chief Holwell had three interviews with the Nawāb and received an assurance of safety from him. The victorious troops "had plundered the Europeans of their valuables, but did not ill-treat them. But about sunset, some European soldiers had made themselves drunk and assaulted natives. The latter complained to the Nawāb, who asked where the Europeans were accustomed to confine soldiers who had misbehaved in any way. He was told—in the Black Hole . . . and ordered that they should all be confined in it . . ." All the prisoners were crowded into this chamber 18 feet by 14 feet 10 inches, with only one small window, throughout that hot night of June, and in the morning many were found to have perished of suffocation or their wounds. (Hill, I, xc)

Up to this point the evidence is clear. We see that the English Council had begun the war by ordering their soldiers not to take any prisoners, as they had no safe place to keep them in. Neither had the Murshidabad troops; but they did not follow such an inhuman course, nor did they use their legitimate right under International Law which makes prisoners of war liable to be shot if they assault their guards. With oriental humanity they merely put restraints on the rowdy Englishmen, but in the unsettled conditions of a fort taken by storm, with fires raging outside, they had no time to separate the sheep from the goats, and the prison was left in charge of the common soldiers throughout the night.

But the number of victims afterwards given out and accepted in Europe (namely 123 dead out of 146 confined[1]) is manifestly an exaggeration. For one thing, after the death, evacuation, stealthy walking away already described from authentic records and admitted by Hill, 146 Britishers could not have been left in Sirāj's hands at 7 p.m. three hours after the surrender. This point was first argued by Mr. Little, Headmaster of the English High School in Murshidabad. Secondly, a floor area of 267 square feet cannot contain 146 European adults. This point was established by

[1] It rose to 200 men in the story told by some English fugitives sheltered in Chandernagar.

Bholanath Chunder, who fenced round an area 18 feet by 15, with bamboo stakes and counted the number of his Bengali tenants who could be crammed into it ; the number was found to be much less than 146, and a Bengali villager's body occupies much less space than a British gentleman's. It is nowhere admitted that a list was made of the Britishers surrendering after 4 p. m. that evening, nor even a count of heads made. At the same time as many of the foreigners in the fort as could, escaped by walking away secretly between the surrender and the time of putting the prisoners in the Black Hole. Even Holwell was offered by a friend the chance to escape thus.

Therefore, 146 Europeans could not have been left in the hands of Sirāj's soldiers at 7 p. m. that fatal evening. The true number was considerably less, probably only sixty. It is a very reasonable supposition that all the former British residents of Calcutta whose manner of death could not be clearly ascertained in that week of confused fighting, administrative breakdown, and loss of home and records, were afterwards set down as "perished in the Black Hole"[1] and their names were blazoned on Holwell's Monument. Holwell and some other leading servants of the Company were removed as prisoners to Murshidabad, but a few days later they were set free, and joined the English fleet at Falta. Only one white woman (Mrs. Carey, the wife of a sea-faring man) entered the Black Hole and she came out of it alive ; but "almost all the white women and children of Calcutta were on board the ships that escaped" to Falta. (Hill, I. xcvii).

The capture of Calcutta and other factories in Bengal, inflicted a loss of 95 lakhs of rupees on the E. I. Company, besides 160 lakhs on private persons, though Sirāj found only half a lakh in the Company's treasury. Three days after the surrender, Sirāj-ud-daulah left Calcutta, and after levying forced contributions from the Dutch and the French factories (4½ and 3½ lakhs respectively), reentered Murshidabad, on 11 July, in pompous celebration of his triumph.

But a cloud began to darken the horizon : news came that the Purniā Nawāb was again preparing for a war of succession and had started intriguing at the Delhi imperial Court. So, at the end of the next month (September) an expedition against him had to be launched by Sirāj-ud-daulah.

[1] Hill, I. xciv. n. gives 56 names, to which Lord Curzon added the names of some who had been killed in fighting. Hill admits (I. xcvi), "In the careless talk of Calcutta the Black Hole and (old) Fort William seem to have been often confounded."

V. The conquest of Purnia

Shaukat Jang, who succeeded as Nawāb of Purniā on 27 March 1756, had all the vices of his rival Sirāj-ud-daulah,—the same ignorant pride, insane ambition, uncontrollable passions, looseness of tongue and addiction to drink. He had no doubt greater personal courage than his craven cousin and recklessly courted death in battle, but his few loyal and capable servants failed to do him any good owing to his capricious levity and insane obstinacy. Sirāj treated his devoted partisans better, and thus could achieve some success through them.

Soon after Alivardi's death, Shaukat Jang received a secret letter from Mir Ja'far urging him to invade Bengal and assuring him of the support of himself and many other captains in Murshidabad, who were eager for deliverance from Sirāj's tyranny. But the Purniā Nawāb needed no prompting from others. In his unbridled ambition he planned to dethrone Sirāj. With this aim he started intrigues at the Delhi imperial Court for a *farmān* granting the three eastern subahs to him, exactly as Shujā'-ud-din had done before Murshid Quli's death. The conspiracy became known and Sirāj started for the conquest of Purniā within a month of his accession, but on the way he turned aside to crush the English merchants of Calcutta, in order to secure his rear. Calcutta having been captured, Sirāj set out for Purniā again when the monsoon ended (*c.* 24 September, 1756.)

Meantime, Shaukat Jang had secured from the unprincipled imperial wazir Ghāzi-ud-din I'mād-ul-mulk permission to wrest Bengal, Bihar and Orissa from Sirāj, by promising him a bribe of one kror of Rupees,—just the same game as Alivardi's. He had already assumed the title of '*Ālampanāh* (Emperor). When Sirāj's agent Rāi Rās Bihāri reached Rājmahal and sent to Shaukat Jang the letter of Sirāj asking him to give Rās Bihāri peaceful possession, the mad lord of Purniā wrote back ordering Sirāj to vacate the throne of Murshidabad for him and go and live at Dacca as his deputy!

Sirāj's forces were swelled by the junction of Rām Nārāyan (the deputy governor of Patna) and many Bihar zamindārs, and outnumbered the Purniā army as two to one. But Shaukat Jang's chances of making any effective defence were ruined by his thoughtlessness and pride.

The advanced division of the invading army, led by Raja Mohan Lal, crossed the Ganges at Rājmahal, and by way of Hayātpur and Basantpur Golā (*i.e.*, skirting the eastern bank of the old

Kosi) entered South Purniā and arrived at Manihāri. The second half of the Bengal army and the Bihar auxiliaries under Rāja Rām Nārāyan followed some distance behind.

Meantime Shaukat Jang's forces had arrived and taken up an entrenched position at Nawābganj, four miles north of Manihāri. Here the deserted old bed of the Kosi river (known as the Sonrā), formed a hair-pin bend, about 30 miles south of Purniā town and ten miles north of the Ganges. This loop of stagnant marshes supplied a natural barrier to the Purniā troops, on the north, east and south. Shaukat Jang's army was only half the size of his rival's force, and to add to his misfortunes, his past conduct had so thoroughly estranged his generals from him and the faithful old leaders from his unworthy favourites that they encamped in distant isolation from one another, thus making concerted action impossible. Shyām Sundar, a Bengali Kāyastha, commanded the field artillery of Shaukat Jang; but he issued from the *jhil* and took post in the plain without any natural defence before him, a mile in front of his side on their east. Some four miles west of him, behind the *jhils* lay the quarters of the regular cavalry and other troops under the old captains of Purniā, in a position where any help from their own artillery was impossible. The Nawāb's tents were pitched in the centre, about a mile west of the artillery and three miles east of his cavalry.

Battle of Manihari, 16 October 1756.

The clash of arms took place on 16th October. One-third of the day had already passed when the flags of Sirāj-ud-daulah's advanced division (under Mohan Lal) were seen moving into the plain outside the village of Manihāri, about three miles south of the Purniā troops. Leaving their tents and baggage on the bank of the Ganges, in the rear, the invaders drew up their forces carefully and in proper order. At first there was the usual futile long distance cannonade. But after two hours bigger guns arrived on the Bengal side and their shots began to fall near the trenches, and a few occasionally inside them.

Shaukat Jang kept frantically sending courier after courier to his captains, three miles away on his right, with orders to issue from their trenches and charge the Bengal army, but they sent back replies declining to make any such wild movement, as they would be mown down by the Bengal artillery while trying to cross the big swamp in front of them, without any artillery protection.

Some hours passed in this kind of wrangling. At last, some

highborn Shiā' captains, stung to the quick by Shaukat Jang's taunts, set out to deliver a charge. They had crossed only half the *jhil* and were still struggling with the mud in loose broken formation, when the Bengal artillery and musketeers began to shoot them down from their safe position on the opposite bank. No reply to this fire was possible. Many of the Purniā troops were slain and wounded; many who had reached the other bank were captured; the rest broke, recrossed the *jhil* and fled away without having once had the chance of drawing their swords.

The Bengal army now made a general advance and the field was soon swept clear of the enemy. Shaukat Jang stood on his elephant in a drunken and dazed condition, with only 15 or 16 attendants. But a musket shot killed him, his jewelled turban rolled down to the ground, and the contest was over. By the time the battle ended it was sunset, and so, there could be no pursuit. The fugitives (including the historian Ghulām Husain) escaped to their homes without any molestation. [*Siyar*, text 215-224, eye-witness's account.]

CHAPTER XXVI

THE END OF MUSLIM RULE.

I. Recovery of the English

Conqueror of Calcutta in June and of Purnia in October, 1756, Siraj-ud-daulah now reached the zenith of his fortune, as the Patna historian Sayyid Ghulām Husain observes (*Siyar.* 224.) He was still further gratified by the arrival of a farmān from the Delhi Emperor confirming him in the subahdāri of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa, in return for a heavy tribute. He continued to expect that the English merchants would humbly petition for being restored to their peaceful business, as they had done so often before, after their ruptures with the Mughal Government under Shāista Khan and Murshid Quli Khan. But his dream was rudely disturbed when at the beginning of December he received news of English reinforcements coming to their refugees at Faltā for the recovery of Calcutta.

During this interval, the supreme English Council in Madras had decided to postpone military operations in Bengal till after the unhealthy monsoon months. And now strong forces, military and naval, the British king's and the E. I. Company's, led by Col. Clive and Admiral Watson, began to assemble at Faltā on the 15th of December. On the 27th of that month the expedition started from Faltā, and two days later sailed past Budge Budge and anchored between Makwā Thānah and Aligarh (a new mud fort some three miles east of Budge Budge and on the same left bank of the Ganges.) There was a skirmish at noon (29th) between the land forces under Clive and the Nawab's troops coming down from Calcutta under Mānik Chand to reinforce the garrison of Budge Budge. A surprise attack inflicted some loss on the English, but Mānik Chand fled away, when a shot whizzed by his turban. Budge Budge fort was bombarded from the ships. In the night following, the enemy had already begun evacuating Budge Budge, when near midnight a drunken English sailor named Strahan "alone stormed the fort" by climbing the breach and attacking the guards, after which he was joined by his naval comrades. These initial victories damped the *morale* of the Nawab's troops. "What had most terrified the natives, was the firing of the heavy guns on the big ships. Nothing so dreadful had ever been known in Bengal, and the most extra-

ordinary ideas were entertained of what the ships could do" . . . "The courage of the Admiral's sailors is almost incredible. Three or four with their cutlasses will attack fifty or more of the enemy, who are struck with such a panick at the sight of them. . . the sailors being determined neither to give nor to receive any quarter." (Hill, Vol, I. cxxxvii and cxli). Budge Budge fortifications were dismantled the next day, and as the British advanced, they found the forts of Makwā Thānah and Aligarh (opposite each other) deserted. A land force under Clive marched up the left bank of the river and reached Calcutta on the 2nd of January 1757. But that city had been already taken possession of by a party from the ship of Admiral Watson who had arrived before Fort William about half past ten in the forenoon. The British loss was only nine men.

A manifesto was issued by Clive and Watson, declaring war on the Nawāb and giving the reasons for it, (3rd January.) A week later Clive formed a fortified camp near Barnagore, and on the 10th stormed the Mughal thānah of Hugli, the soldiers and sailors sacking that town and plundering and burning the villages around.

The Nawāb, roused by the news of the fall of Budge Budge, reached Hugli on 19th January, and the English fell back on Calcutta to their Barnagore camp. On 3rd February, Sirāj-ud-daulah arrived outside Calcutta and encamped in the northern suburb, he himself in Amir Chand's garden[1]. Under him were 40,000 horse and 60,000 foot with 30 guns. The British army numbered 711 European infantry and 100 artillerymen, with 1,300 sepoys and 14 guns. Negotiations for peace were started but half heartedly.

On 5th February Clive delivered a surprise raid on the Nawāb's camp early in the morning. The attacking force was composed of 500 British rank and file, 600 sailors, 60 artillerymen and 800 sepoy infantry with six guns. From the Barnagore camp, it started about 3 a.m, and moving nearly parallel to the Maratha Ditch entered the Nawab's camp, south of the village of Chitpur at daybreak. But a dense fog covered the damp rice fields, Clive's guide lost the way, "and the battle was fought in great confusion. The British after repulsing one or two bold attacks of the Persian cavalry, forced their way through the enemy's camp, . . . until they came opposite to the Nawab's tents in Amir Chand's garden. The Nawab . . . escaped with great difficulty. About 9 a. m., the fog began to lift,

[1] Situated on the eastern bank of the Maratha Ditch, just outside Calcutta, and bounded on the north and south by the eastward prolongations of the old Shova Bazar and Shambazar streets respectively.

and the British were exposed to a cannonade from the Maratha Ditch." This inflicted heavy loss on the British and threw their whole force into confusion. But Clive crossed the "causeway" or elevated embanked road running eastwards over the fields from the end of the modern Bechu Chatterji's Street, and pushing on further south gained the road issuing eastwards from the Sealdah end of Bowbazar Street. Thus, fighting all the way, he returned to the old Fort William about noon.

In this action the British lost 57 men killed and 137 wounded, besides abandoning two guns; the Nawab's side suffered 1300 casualties. But though "this skirmish was much more bloody than the decisive battle of Plassey," it was not fruitless. The Nawāb felt fully insecure in the neighbourhood of the English, retired to the salt Lakes (modern Dhākuriā) and renewed peace parleys in earnest. Only four days later, a treaty[1] was signed, by which the E. I. Company's trade rights and factories were restored, and restitution and money compensation promised by the Nawāb for the losses of the Company and its servants and tenants, and the English were allowed to fortify Calcutta and to coin *sicca* rupees.

II. Capture of Chandernagore.

Having thus neutralised the Nawāb, Clive in the development of his far-sighted policy, promptly turned to crushing the French power in Bengal, so as to leave no European rival capable of assisting the Nawāb in future. Sirāj-ud-daulah had neither the wisdom nor the courage of Alivardi in sternly forbidding any war between the foreign traders in his own dominion. He oscillated between his suspicion of the French who had reduced the Nizām to a puppet, and his fear of the English who might attack him if he openly stood by the French. Like other weak men, he gave the evasive reply, "Your friends and enemies will be my friends and enemies", when Clive asked for his permission to attack French Chandernagore. When the French governor appealed to the Nawab for protection against the impending invasion of their settlement by the English, he made no response.

The English lost no time. Their land and sea forces moved up against Chandernagore. On 12th March, Clive encamped two miles from that town, and on the 14th attacked and drove in their outposts.

[1] For details see Hill, vol. I. cxlviii, where additional money indemnities and presents are mentioned, but no mention of the Black Hole victims.

Chandernagore was really in no defensible condition, though its Director (chief) Mons. Renault had done all that was in his power, in his utter want of money, men, and trained officers. His garrison was hopelessly inadequate against a European enemy. He had only 247 soldiers (including 45 French pensioners and sick), 120 sailors, 70 half-castes and private Europeans, 100 civilians, 167 sepoys, and 100 topasses or half-caste gunners,—forming a total of 794 fighting men of all classes.

The fort within Chandernagore, named Fort d' Orleans, was a square, 600 feet on each side, built of bricks, flanked with four bastions of 16 guns, without outworks, ramparts or glacis. A part of the south curtain and the entire north curtain, consisted of a wall of earth and brick, a foot and a half thick and 18 feet high. Warehouses lined the east curtain which faced the Ganges. All this side had no ditch, and the ditch that surrounded the other three sides was dry and only four feet deep. The fortifications of the Fort were only 15 feet high, while the houses which commanded it from the edge of the counterscarp within musket range, had a height of 30 feet.

Inadequate as the fortifications were, the difficulties of the defenders were increased by their "unwise wish to defend the town, which led to a great waste of time in erecting outposts and barriers in the principal streets at some distance from the Fort. The Fort itself was commanded by a number of houses, from which the British musketeers could command the men working the batteries in the Fort." Vessels had been sunk in a narrow part of the Ganges, below the eastern face of the Fort, in the hope of preventing the English ships from coming up alongside; but this work had not been completed, and in the actual attack the English admiral overcame this obstacle, by sending up small vessels and carefully piloting them.

Hostilities began on the 14th of March, when Clive drove in the outposts (at night), and then waited for the coming of his ships. In the evening of the 17th, Sub-Lieutenant Cossart de Terraneau, who commanded the French artillery, deserted to the English, and the information which he supplied enabled them to direct their bombardment with the greatest destructiveness to the vital points of the defence works. "He was the only French artillery officer, and so his desertion was a serious loss to his countrymen." But the French from within fought on regardless of the odds.

Early in the morning of the 23rd Clive stormed the French battery which commanded the river passage, and three British ships of light burden passed the sunken ships without any difficulty. For two hours or more there ensued a terrible cannonade between the

ships with their 100 guns and the hopelessly outclassed and outnumbered French batteries. Two of the English ships were severely damaged, " but the walls of Fort d' Orleans were in ruins, the gunners almost all killed, and the men were being shot down by Clive's musketeers from the roofs of the neighbouring houses . . . In this single day's fighting the French lost two Captains and 200 men in killed and wounded. About half-past nine Renault hoisted the white flag. " Articles were signed by which the French lost their military power and even independence in Bengal, and the English were left without a rival in the province. The victors had lost fully as many men as the French,[1]—almost entirely on the ships.

III. Mir Ja'far's Conspiracy

From the fall of Chandernagore to the battle of Plāssey lay a period of exactly three months, during which a relentless Fate seemed to be dragging a blind Sirāj-ud-daulah on to destruction. Clive's capture of Chandernagore " deprived the Nawab of his natural (and only capable) allies against the English; and nothing can extenuate his folly in allowing their destruction . . . He changed his mind again (and again), and in the end did nothing. No conduct could have been feebler or more unwise. He gave open display to his hostile feelings against the English, while allowing them unmolested to destroy the French . . . He proceeded to write to Bussy to come to his help from the Deccan. " (Dodwell.)

The Nawab's mind was further confused by the alarming news coming from Delhi, where the imperial city had been entered by the agents of Ahmad Shah Ābdāli the Afghan invader, in whose name the khutba had been read there on 21st January 1757. A month later Ahmad Shah had left Delhi and gone south to Āgrā and Mathurā slaying and plundering. There was reason to fear that he would push eastwards to Oudh and Bengal. And therefore Sirāj-ud-daulah courted the good will of the English as the only power strong enough to oppose an Afghan invasion. But Ābdāli retired from Delhi on 3rd April, this danger passed away, and Sirāj now began to protect Mons. Jean Law and the French fugitives from Chandernagore at Qāsimbāzār,. This policy alarmed the

[1] An official return showed that out of an original strength of 552 Frenchmen, the fall of Chandernagore found 212 Europeans killed wounded and sick in hospital (that is over 40 per cent.), 125 released on parole, and 215 made prisoners. (Hill, vol. III. 420.)

English, who now decided to overthrow Sirāj-ud-daulah and set up a friendly Nawāb on the throne, so that they would be sure of their defence if a strong French force from the Deccan under a general of Bussy's capacity invaded Bengal to restore the French power. "It was becoming apparent (at Calcutta) that many persons besides the English had cause to fear Sirāj-ud-daulah and desired a revolution in the government. The chief people in this movement were Hindus . . . Sirāj alienated all the principal men of the darbar. The great Hindu bankers, the (Jagat) Seths . . . had been threatened with circumcision," and Rāi Durlabh the former *diwān* and Mir Ja'far the former *bakhshi* had been deprived of their offices and humiliated. The Seths took the leading part in organising this plot for purifying the administration, as after the fall of Shaukat Jang the English were found to be the only power that could deliver the country from this insane and cowardly tyrant. Towards the end of April, the Calcutta Council began to get promises of co-operation from important personages, especially Mir Ja'far, and on 1st May the Council agreed to a secret treaty with Ja'far, promising to place him on the throne on the following conditions: "an alliance, offensve and defensive; the surrender of all French fugitives and factories; restitution of all English losses, public and private, caused by the capture of Calcutta; the admission of all *farmān* rights; liberty to fortify Qāsimbāzār and Dacca (factories); no fortifications to be erected (by the Nawāb) below Hugli; the recognition of English sovereignty within the bounds of Calcutta; the grant of territories for the maintenance of a proper military force; extraordinary expenses while the troops were on campaign for the Nawāb to be paid by him; and the residence at the Nawāb's darbār of one of the Company's servants."[1]

This conspiracy was conducted and completed in Murshidabad by William Watts, the chief of the English factory in *Qāsimbāzār*, with remarkable diplomatic skill, secrecy and courage. On 5th June he visited Mir Ja'far in secret and obtained his oath to the treaty. It was his good fortune that the secret of it was kept from the Nawāb's loyal courtiers and from M. Jean Law, who jealously

[1] In short, this treaty turned the subahdār of Bengal Bihar and Orissa into a mediatised Indian ruler, subject to British control, exactly of the type created by the subsidiary alliance system ascribed to Wellesley, with two differences, (a) no land was politically ceded for the maintenance of a subsidiary contingent, and (b) no ban was explicitly placed on the employment of European servants by the Nawab. But no reference was made to the Emperor of Delhi for the confirmation of the "English Nawāb."

watched the English from the French factory and had ready access to the Nawab's ear. On 11th June the treaty was delivered to the Select Committee at Calcutta, and as arranged, on the 12th Watts and his companions fled from Murshidabad. (Dodwell.)

On 13th June Clive began his march on the Nawāb's capital, with an army of 3,000 men; of whom only 800 were Europeans, and the rest sepoys and half-caste gunners.[1] Leaving his camp in the French Gardens outside Chandernagore (now in British occupation), he awed the Nawāb's faujdār of Hugli into inaction, and sent a letter of complaint to the Nawab, in which he maintained silence about his intention to fight. His sepoys marched by land, and white troops and Eurasians by boat. On the 17th the army reached Patli.

On the 19th a detachment sent by him under Major Eyre Coote took Kātwā fort, which the enemy deserted at his approach. This place commanded the highroad to Murshidabad and it also contained a very large quantity of grain. The rest of the English army arrived at Kātwā late that night and halted for two days.

Clive was filled with anxiety as he gazed at an uncertain future. "Up to this time he had received nothing but bare promises from Mir Ja'far, . . . and he hesitated to risk the fortunes of the Company on the bare word of a man who was a traitor to his own sovereign." So, he at first thought of holding his present position at Kātwā (instead of crossing the Ganges and advancing on Murshidabad), till the end of the rainy season. A council of war held by him on 21st June decided by a majority in favour of halting there instead of advancing and seeking battle. But an hour after this council, Clive changed his mind and decided to advance next day without caring whether he received any assurance of junction from Mir Ja'far or not. On the 22nd the English army set out from Kātwā, crossed the Ganges and after a long toilsome march in rain and heat, reached Plāssey about midnight. Here they made contact with the enemy.

IV. Plassey, the Ground and the Rival Hosts

Clive's camp was a mango-grove called the *Lakshabāgh* (or the Park of a hundred thousand trees), 800 yards by 300, with the trees planted in regular rows, and surrounded on four sides by an earthen embankment, which served as a good breast-work; while the

[1] 650 European infantry, 100 half-caste gunners (topasses), 150 artillerymen including 50 sailors, and 2100 sepoys, with a 8 pieces of cannon (six pounders.)

thick branches gave protection from the enemy's shots overhead. The north-western corner of the grove was only 150 yards from the Ganges, which thus guarded its left flank, while the village of Piassey, 1,100 yards behind protected the rear. About 200 yards north of the grove, on the bank of the river stood the Nawab's hunting-lodge (known as "Piassey House"), a brick building surrounded by a masonry wall which Clive immediately occupied and the roof of which served as a good observation post. Four hundred yards north of the hunting-lodge and again close to the river bank stood a large tank, and 100 yards north of it a smaller tank, surrounded by high earthen banks, as usual in Bengal. Here were posted about 45 French helpers of the Nawab, under Monsieur de Sinfray with four light field-pieces, served by his men with remarkable accuracy. Still further northwards, some 500 yards beyond this French party and 400 yards east of the river stood a large dry mound, covered with jungle, which was held by the Nawab's own men and guarded the main entrance to his camp. A redoubt in the southern line of his entrenchments, a little west of this mound, formed the defence of the main entrance on its western side. From this point the trenches ran in a long line curving north-eastwards, with many openings to allow the troops to issue for battle from their respective quarters. The site of the Nawab's camp is called *Māngor-pārā* in a Dutch letter from Qasimbazar.

Between the shelter of the French tank and this big dry mound, was massed the most effective portion of Siraj-ud-daulah's army,—indeed the only men who fought for him, under the faithful Mir Madan (Chief of Artillery), Mohan Lāl Kashmiri, and other men of honour. This was the vanguard of the Nawab's troops and numbered 5,000 chosen Mughal horse and 7,000 infantry (Rajputs and Pathans), with two heavy guns, and these alone were actually engaged in that day's battle.

The vanguard formed a short north-to-south line, behind the French tank. Making a sharp angle to this line, on the left of it the other troops were drawn up in a huge semi-circle, to the east and south in three vast columns, under Yar Lutf Khan, Rai Durlabh and Mir Ja'far, placed further and further away from the English in this order. But all these troops were "outside the combat" on that eventful day. Each column had its own artillery placed on its two flanks, instead of all the guns being grouped together in one strong battery.

The Nawab's forces made a most impressive show, as after issuing from their camp they drew up on the plain north-east of

the village of Plassey, in a vast arc, over two miles in length, almost surrounding the British army and threatening to drive it into the Ganges which flowed on its left. Taking horse and foot together they numbered nearly 50,000 men, but only some 12,000 men forming the vanguard or the right wing and 12 pieces of cannon took any part in the battle.[1] The Nawab's infantry possessed little or no discipline . . . and most of the men were armed with swords, pikes, bows and arrows! His cavalry was of a superior description, both men and horses being of northern origin and large size. (*Broome*, 143).

Sirāj had 53 pieces of artillery, mostly of heavy calibres, 32, 24 and 18 pounders. These were mounted on large platforms furnished with wheels, and drawn by 40 or 50 yoke of powerful oxen, assisted by elephants; an elephant followed each carriage, pushing it forward with his head, whenever it came to any difficulty. On these platforms were conveyed not only the guns and carriages, but the ammunition, stores and gunners also. (*Broome*, 142.) "Their cannon moved along, and in front of their main body, in such manner that their whole front was almost covered with the bullocks that drew them." (Clive.)

This huge many-coloured crowd of men, horses, and elephants was faced by a thin line of red coats and white cross-belts, some 600 yards in length, the white faces (950) in the centre and the brown faces (2,100) in the wings with six very light guns in front.[2] But there was to be no clash of steel that day, no hand to hand cavalry fight, so dear to the heart of every Indian soldier of that age.

The British portion of Clive's army was made up of 950 European infantry and 150 artillerymen (including 57 sailors), with a number of laskars to assist. His Indian troops were 2,100 sepoys,

[1] As Jean Law writes: "With the exception of some 50 Europeans who were with M. Sinfray, and two or three chiefs who commanded bodies of cavalry, all the rest of the army stood with folded arms or only showed that they were on the side of Siraj-ud-daulah by the promptitude with which they took to flight. Fear pervaded the whole army before the action commenced. Every one was persuaded that Siraj-ud-daulah was betrayed, and no one knew whom to trust. (Hill, iii 212). Except the vanguard under Mir Madan and Mohan Lal, and its 12 guns, the rest of the Nawab's artillery (under the three traitors) did not fire a single shot during the day.

[2] Broome (p. 142) gives 900 Europeans (infantry, artillery and naval gunners) and 200 Topasses *i. e.*, Portuguese Eurasians serving with the British infantry, a total of 1,100 besides Indian laskars to assist the artillery; 2,100 sepoys, eight six-pounder guns and two howitzers. Hill (I. cxcvi) reduces the numbers of the Europeans and the Topasses by 100 each.

all infantry, partly Madras men (called Telingās) and partly the Bengal Native Infantry (First Battalion) popularly called the Lāl Paltan. This last had been raised as recently as January, after the recapture of Calcutta, by enlisting men of Bihar, Oudh, the Doab and Rohilkhand, and it contained Pathans, Rohillas, Jats, Rajputs and Brahmans (the "Pāndés" of the Sepoy Mutiny), but the majority of the men in the ranks were Muslims, many of them disbanded soldiers of the Indian princes. (*Broome*, 93).

The battle line of Clive was thus formed: in the centre were placed the Europeans, in four battalions, under Majors Killpatrick, Archibald Grant, and Eyre Coote, and Captain Gaupp. On the two wings the sepoys were posted in two divisions, with three six-pounder guns on each flank of the Europeans, a little ahead of the infantry. They were drawn up in the plain in front of the mango-grove, in a line about 600 yards in length, from west to east with the river on their left.

V. Battle of Plassey

Thursday the 23rd of June, 1757 exactly one year and two days after the Nawab's capture of Calcutta, witnessed a battle which was destined to revolutionise the life of India, and indirectly and slowly that of the eastern hemisphere, though when judged as a trial of arms military critics are apt to slight it as a mere skirmish or distant cannonade.

At eight o'clock in the morning both hosts were in position. The first blood was drawn by white men from white men. The French opened fire from the big tank only 200 yards from the English line and killed one grenadier and wounded another of the Bengal European Regiment. This was the signal for the whole attacking force to join in the action, and a heavy cannonade began from the Nawab's line, most of which was badly aimed and did little mischief. The English at once replied with their six-pounders, which took effect on the dense masses of the enemy and kept them back, but were too short in range to silence the Nawab's artillery. In half an hour the British lost 30 men in killed and wounded, and Clive retired his men to the grove, where the trees protected them overhead and the embankment in front.

The smart and accurate fire of the English guns from the embrasures made in the mud wall of the mango-grove, killed a number of the enemy's gunners and caused several serious explosions among their carelessly exposed munitions. Hence, the falling back of the English line did not embolden the Nawab's cavalry to charge.

Three hours passed in this static cannonade. And then, shortly after 11 a.m a thunderstorm burst with tropical fury, turning the sandy plain of Plassey into a mud swamp. The Nawab's artillery was now put out of action as their uncovered gunpowder had been damped by rain while the English had carefully kept their powder dry. When the rain ceased, Mir Madan ordered the long-waited-for gallant charge in the hope of overwhelming the English by numbers, thinking that their guns had been similarly rendered useless by rain. But the rapid fire of grape-shot from the English guns at close range wrought havoc among the advancing crowd of Bengal cavaliers. Here at the head of the charge fell Mir Madan, Bahādur Ali Khan (the son-in-law of Mohan Lāl and commander of the *bahalia* musketeers), Nauwe Singh Hazāri (captain of artillery), and some other high officers. The advance was checked and the cavalry turned their faces towards their entrenchment.

It was now two o'clock in the afternoon. Clive on learning of the enemy's flinching, came out of the hunting-lodge and found that their cannonade had entirely ceased and the men were yoking their oxen and slowly retiring towards their camp. Treachery had been at work in the Nawab's army. On hearing of Mir Madan's fall, Sirāj-ud-daulah had called Mir Ja'far to his tent and appealed to his loyalty, by laying his turban at his feet and saying, "It is for you to defend my honour." Mir Ja'far swore on the Quran to fight the English, and advised the Nawab to withdraw his troops from the field and fight with renewed vigour next morning under his leadership. On coming out of the Nawab's tent to his own troops in the field, he sent a letter to Clive telling him of the Nawab's helplessness and despair and urging the English to advance at once and seize the camp.

His treacherous advice had begun to work. The troops in the field, while shaken by Mir Madan's fall and the repulse of their vanguard, received orders that the engagement was suspended for the day, and began a withdrawal. But the handful of Frenchmen kept their stand at the most advanced post facing the English. Such was the sight which had made Major Killpatrick on his own initiative order an advance by a small English detachment. Clive came upon the scene immediately after this forward movement had started; he took the command himself, and launched an assault upon Sinfray's isolated position in force. The Frenchmen were outnumbered; but limbering up their guns they retired in good order and made a second stand in the redoubt guarding the entrance to the Nawab's camp.

Having seized the French tanks, Clive planted all his field-pieces there and began to throw shots into the enemy's camp. Here he

halted for about two hours, keeping a keen eye on the vast enemy position before him and watching for his chance. Soon there was a return of the tide; the Muslim retreat stopped. All the Bengal army was not made up of Mir Ja'fars and Rai Durlabhs; there were in it many men of honour, Rajputs with their inborn contempt of death and Shias nursed on the chivalrous traditions of Persia, who would not yield without one more struggle.[1] The shower was over, they had eaten their afternoon refreshments in the camp and now began to come out again from the entrenchment with dry gunpowder from their stores, to renew the combat, even though they had no supreme leader to inspire and guide them. But the ground beneath them was rain-soaked. As their horses were floundering in the mud and the clumsy wheels of their heavy gun-platforms were sinking in the ground, and their draught oxen refused to make any advance under the lash, the English cannon fired from only two hundred yards' distance with deadly precision and rapidity, ploughed their disordered and crowded ranks. The confusion passed beyond remedy from the writhing of wounded men, horses and oxen, the stampede of elephants, and the exploison of powder. But all was not yet over.

"Sinfray plied his guns from the redoubt with great spirit, and the enemy's matchlockmen from the entrenchments and the hillock east of the redoubt, maintained an irregular but unintermitting fire. Their cavalry also made several bold attempts to charge, but were as often repulsed by the rapid and deadly fire of the British field pieces. It was here that the contest was most obstinate, and on this occasion the chief loss of the English was sustained." (*Broome*, 148).

But, in truth, by this time the Bengal army was really spent. In their centre and left, the vast cavalry hordes of Mir Ja'far, Durlabh Ram, and Yar Lutf were seen retiring further and further away without having fired a shot during the whole day, while Clive's musketeers, now lodged close behind the nearest mounds, kept up volley firing with a precision and rapidity unknown to our indigenous forces.

[1] "The Nawab's soldiers could not understand how so small a British force could overwhelm so powerful an army as their own; so, declining to accept defeat, they brought up large bodies of cavalry, who had not hitherto taken an active part in the engagement; and who having obtained dry powder from their entrenchment, poured a heavy fire on the mound which Clive had just captured from the French." (Innes, *Hist. of Bengal Europe, Reg.*, 63).

"When Mir Jafar counselled the Nawab to suspend the fight for that day and recall his troops from the field, Mohan Lal refused to retreat on the ground that it would lead to a rout. But Mir Jafar stuck to his own advice and left the decision to Siraj." (*Siyar*, text. 229).

Many of their own comrades were seem to be on retreat behind them.

The eagle eye of the British General seized this psychological moment. Clive sprang forward to deliver the decisive blow. His halt at the French tanks was over. He sent two strong detachments to advance on his two flanks to dislodge the defenders of the redoubt and the dry jungly mound east of it;[1] these were the posts held by his enemy outside their camp. At the same time the main body of the British army moved forward more slowly in support of the right or the left advance as might be found necessary.

At last the struggle was over. The Nawab's army fled away leaving their guns behind, and then the whole body of the victors entered the entrenchments. All was confusion and flight within. The Nawab himself had fled away soon after 4 p.m., there was no leader left to conduct an orderly retreat. The victory was complete by 5 o'clock. Clive's soldiers, with wonderful discipline did not stop to plunder such an immensely rich camp, but pushed on to Daudpur, six miles from the field, that night, in order to seize the the Nawab's capital before he could rally his forces there.

In this historic action, the British lost only seven Europeans and 16 sepoys killed, and 13 Europeans and 36 sepoys wounded, a total casualty figure of 72.[2] Eighty per cent of this loss fell on their artillery,—evidently the feat of Sinfray's men. On the Nawab's side about 500 men were killed and a due proportion wounded. Among the wounded officers were Mohan Lāl, Mānik Chand (a Bengali Kāyastha), and Khwāja Hādi [*Hill,* II, 426.] But all his artillery (53 pieces), baggage, camp equipage, stores and cattle fell into the victor's hands; nothing could be carried away. But as there was no opposition, there was not after Plassey the carnage that usually follows a rout; all the Bengal losses were suffered in the open field.

VI. The Contrasted Tactics . . . .

The tactics of the battle of Plassey are quite easy to follow when we bear in mind the difference between the two sides in

[1] "The (British) detachment at the first tank, with some *sepoys in front,* being ordered, accordingly rushed on, fired on the enemy when they got to the top, and drove them off with . . . precipitation." (Clive in *Hill,* II, 436).

[2] *Broome,* 149. But *Hill* (Vol. I, ccii) gives Europeans, 4 killed and 15 wounded; sepoys 15 killed, 38 wounded,—total 72. The official return after the battle, signed by Major of Brigade, John Fraser, gives 76 killed and wounded and four missing, a total of 80. (*Hill,* II, 425).

armament and war training (especially the vitally important elements of discipline among the men and leadership among the junior officers). Only 12,000 men with 12 guns fought 3,200 men with 8 guns. Clive's policy after the first half-hour (in which he lost 30 men from the French-directed artillery) was to keep his men under cover and fire his guns from embrasures fully shielded by earthworks. Mir Madan, on his part, followed the stereotyped Mughal war-plan of first making a big gun cannonade for overpowering the enemy's inferior artillery, throwing the opposite cavalry into confusion, and if luck assisted blowing up their munition in the field; then after such a preparation for about two hours, launching his own massed cavalry in one charge, riding down the enemy forces, and winning the day by one move.

Such tactics had succeeded in Indian warfare in the 17th century and even in the 18th, when both sides had indigenous armament and leaders; but they proved futile when opposed to the discharge of grape from smaller but very mobile and rapid-firing guns aimed with deadly accuracy from close range, and highly trained musketeers (not clumsy match-lock-men) firing by platoons with the shock effect of machine guns.

Clive handled his small force (entirely infantry-men and foot artillery) with judicious economy. After the first half-hour (when they were exposed and suffered nearly half the casualties of their side for the entire day), he carefully kept them back from exposure. And when in the afternoon, he did again issue into the open plain, every step was taken under artillery protection, and every advance was made in the form of a dash from one protective embankment (round some tank) to another where a halt was made under cover and his artillery brought up alongside and employed in pounding the enemy in their nearest post in front, so as to prepare the ground for the next advance of his infantry.

The Nawab's troops, after the failure of their first old-style charge under Mir Madan at about 2 p.m., learnt a lesson and changed their tactics by using every ground cover available and shooting down the English sepoys from behind such covers as long as they could hold them.

Unlike the English, the Nawab's troops had no grape-firing guns to support their infantry, and, indeed, no artillery help whatever in the afternoon's fighting, except Sinfray's guns in the Redoubt at the angle of their entrenched line. The musketry fire of the British-led sepoys was far superior to that of the Nawab's *bahalias*. In the final stage of the battle, as the British advance was headed

by the sepoys, their white infantry suffered no loss, and their only casualties were among the sepoy infantry and white artillery-men.[1]

VII. The End of Siraj-ud-daulah

From the lost field of Plassey, even before the last struggle had ended, the craven Nawab deserted his soldiers and followers and fled away alone about 4 p.m., on a swift camel, with a few servants and arrived at his capital at midnight. All was terror and confusion in Murshidabad. No real attempt could be made to organise a defence, as the soldiery had lost heart and gone utterly out of hand. Above all Siraj-ud-daulah knew not whom to trust. So, overcome by fear and urged by his women, he resolved on a flight to Patna. In the night of 24th June, he escaped unnoticed from the city attended by a trusty eunuch and his devoted wife Lutf-un-nisā Begam. The capital of Bengal was left without a magistrate or a master, because Mir Ja'far who had reached it on the day after the battle, kept himself confined to his own house and refused to assume the government. But Clive entered the city on the 29th and took up his residence in the Murād-bāgh near the palace of Sirāj. Later, in the afternoon, he went to the palace of Hirājhil, where Mir Ja'far was in residence, and "there in the presence of all the Rajahs and great men of the Court, he led Ja'far Ali Khan by the hand to the royal seat (*masnad*), seated him on it, and saluted him as Nawab of the three Subahs, upon which his courtiers congratulated him and paid him the usual homage." (Clive, in *Hill,* Vol. II. 437.)

Thus ended Muslim rule in Bengal; the foreign master of the sword had become its king-maker.

The fallen Nawab fled by road to Bhagwāngolā on the Padmā and there took boat for going up-stream and reaching Pātnā and his French allies under M. Jean Law. A little below Rājmahal, he alighted from his boat (30th June) to ask for a meal to be cooked for him. Though he had disguised himself in mean clothing,

[1] Clive's letter—"Our four guns from the top of the (first) tank, being a rising ground, played upon the enemy, (who covered the plain with their numbers and at no very great distance), with vast success. They (*i.e.*, the Nawab's troops) had got possession of the second tank (really, the dry mound on one side of the main entrance to the Nawab's camp) with horse and *barqandazes* or gunmen,—as many as could cover themselves from our cannon, behind it, and from thence with their musketry wounded several of our men . . . The enemy endeavoured to use their guns, but we took care to fire on those parts which put their bullocks in such confusion that we received but few shot." (*Hill,* III, 435).

he was recognised by a Muslim faqir, named, Dānā Shāh, whose ears and nose he had ordered to be cut off in the days of his power. This man informed the governor of Rājmahal, who seized Siraj-ud-daulah and sent him under guard to Murshidabad. Here the fallen monarch was brought with great secrecy at night on 2nd July. Mir Ja'far could not decide what to do with him, but left him in the hands of his son Miran and retired to sleep. This brutal youth had Siraj murdered in prison[1] that very night without the knowledge of the English.

His executioner was Muhammadi Beg, a low fellow, whom Sirāj's father had brought up and mother given in marriage. The fallen monarch abased himself to the ground, made frantic appeals for mercy, and promised to live in harmless obscurity if only his life was spared. But all his efforts proved futile. No time was given to him to pray and prepare himself for facing the Great Judge. Then with his last breath he cried out, "I am being killed in retribution for my unjust murder of Husain Quli Khan."

Next morning his mangled body was placed on an elephant and paraded through the streets of the capital as a mark of public degradation (*tash-hir*). Men noted with horror that when the elephant came to a halt for a few minutes at the place where Siraj had caused Husain Quli to be murdered three years earlier, some drops of blood fell down from the dead body on the very same spot. Thus was proved divine justice. When the corpse reached the bazar in front of Sirāj's old residence, and a public clamour arose, a noble matron in dishevelled dress, without shoes on her feet, without a veil to cover her head, was seen to rush out of the palace and approach the elephant, beating her breast and uttering cries of anguish. It was the mother of Sirāj. She learnt of her darling son's fate for the first time from the noise outside, and broke out of *parda* with her weeping train, to have a last look at his mortal remains. But it was not to be. This daughter of a king, wife of a vice-king, and mother of another king was driven back to her home with blows by the ruffianly guards of Khādim Husain, a General, who had been watching the scene from his balcony opposite. And Khādim Husain had been cherished in youth by Alivardi. His gratitude to his benefactor only paralleled that of Mir Ja'far. (*Siyar*, text, 232.)

[1] Miran also murdered Siraj's sole surviving brother Mirza Mahdi and his dead brother Akramuddaulah's son Murad-ud-daulah, thus extinguishing the entire male line of Alivardi's descendants. We know nothing further of Mirza Ramzani, a younger brother of Shaukat Jang (of Purnia), mentioned in the *Siyar*.

Ignoble as the life of Siraj-ud-daulah had been and tragic his end, among the public of his country, his memory has been redeemed by a woman's devotion and a poet's genius. For many years after his death, his widow Lutf-un-nisā Begam used to light a memorial lamp on his tomb every evening as long as she lived. The Bengali poet Nabin Chandra Sen in his master-piece *The Battle of Plassey,* has washed away the follies and crimes of Sirāj by artfully drawing forth his reader's tears for fallen greatness and blighted youth.

VIII. Reflections

When the sun dipped into the Ganges behind the blood-red field of Plassey, on that fateful evening of June, did it symbolise the curtain dropping on the last scene of a tragic drama? Was that day followed by "a night of eternal gloom for India," as the poet of Plassey imagined Mohan Lāl foreboding from the ranks of the losers? Today the historian, looking backward over the two centuries that have passed since then, knows that it was the beginning, slow and unperceived, of a glorious dawn, the like of which the history of the world has not seen elsewhere. On 23rd June, 1757, the middle ages of India ended and her modern age began.

When Clive struck at the Nawab, Mughal civilization had become a spent bullet. Its potency for good, its very life was gone. The country's administration had become hopelessly dishonest and inefficient, and the mass of the people had been reduced to the deepest poverty, ignorance and moral degradation by a small, selfish, proud, and unworthy ruling class. Imbecile lechers filled the throne; the family of Alivardy did not produce a single son worthy to be called a man, and the women were even worse than the men. Sadists like Sirāj and Miran made even their highest subjects live in constant terror. The army was rotten and honey-combed with treason. The purity of domestic life was threatened by the debauchery fashionable in the Court and the aristocracy and the sensual literature that grew up under such patrons. Religion had become the handmaid of vice and folly.

On such a hopelessly decadent society, the rational progressive spirit of Europe struck with resistless force. First of all, an honest and efficient administration had to be imposed on the country and directed by the English, if only for the sake of the internal peace on which their trade depended and the revenue by which its necessary defence force could be maintained. Thus, while the English rulers

kept protesting that they were merchants and not rulers in Bengal, the civil administration, no less than the armed defence, of the country was forced upon them. In the space of less than one generation, in the twenty years from Plassey to Warren Hastings (1757-1776), the land began to recover from the blight of mediæval theocratic rule. Education, literature, society, religion, man's handiwork and political life, all felt the revivifying touch of the new impetus from the west. The dry bones of a stationary oriental society began to stir, at first faintly, under the wand of a heaven-sent magician.

It was truly a Renaissance, wider, deeper, and more revolutionary than that of Europe after the fall of Constantinople. Bengal had been despised and thrown into a corner in the Vedic age as the land of birds (and not of men), in the epic age as outside the regions hallowed by the feet of the wandering Pāndav brothers, and in the Mughal times as "a hell well stocked with bread." But now under the impact of the British civilisation it became a path-finder and a light-bringer to the rest of India. If Periclean Athens was the school of Hellas, "the eye of Greece, mother of arts and eloquence," that was Bengal to the rest of India under British rule, but with a borrowed light, which it had made its own with marvellous cunning. In this new Bengal originated every good and great thing of the modern world that passed on to the other provinces of India. From Bengal went forth the English-educated teachers and the Europe-inspired thought that helped to modernise Bihar and Orissa, Hindustan and Deccan. New literary types, reform of the language, social reconstruction, political aspirations, religious movements and even changes in manners that originated in Bengal, passed like ripples from a central eddy, across provincial barriers to the furthest corners of India.

Finally, after less than two centuries of rule the British have left Bengal free, and better fitted to keep that freedom in the modern world than the Romans had made Britain when they abandoned their imperial domination over the white island, more permanently civilised than the Hellenistic world on the dissolution of Alexander's empire, and more peaceful and progressive than the American colonies of Spain when they shook themselves free of European rule.

Has not Bengal, unknown to herself, been working through the ages to reach this consummation? Her storied past, as narrated in these pages, shows how the diverse limbs of the country and warring tribes and sects of the people were fused into one by the silent working of time and a common political life till at the end of

the Muslim period a Bengali people had become a reality. But not yet a Bengali *nation,* for the pre-requisites of a nation were then wanting. Two centuries of British rule and the neighbouring example of British society have now ground down large sections of the Bengali people to that uniformity of life and thought which alone can create a nation. It is for the future to perfect this good work.

In June, 1757, we crossed the frontier and entered into a great new world to which a strange destiny had led Bengal. Today, in October 1947 we stand on the threshold of the temple of Freedom just opened to us. May the course of the years 1757 to 1947 have prepared us for the supreme stage of our political evolution and helped to mould us truly into a nation. May our future be the fulfilment of our past history.



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No continuous history of the province of Bengal was written in the Persian language before 1788, that is more than one generation after the passing away of Muslim rule, and this book named the *Riyāz-us-Salātin* is meagre in facts, mostly incorrect in detail and dates, and vitiated by loose traditions, as its author had no knowledge of many of the standard Persian authorities who had treated of Bengal as a part of their general histories of India. Again, we miss during the Muslim period (1200-1757) the wealth and variety of inscriptions which illuminate the life of the province during the preceding Hindu period. The extant Arabic and Persian inscriptions found in Bengal merely record the names of the builders of mosques and tombs and their dates. During the many centuries when Bengal was a part of the empire of Delhi, the only mention of the province in the historical chronicles of Delhi occurs when something abnormal happened there, as in fact Bengal affairs had no "news value" to the royalty and courtiers of Delhi. In this barren desert of historical ignorance, the only oasis is the reign of Jahangir, for which a special Bengal history was written to the dictation of Mirzā Nathan (entitled Shitāb Khan) who was serving there all the time. This Persian work was brought to light by me in 1919 and it has been translated into English by Dr. Borah (Gauhati, 1936). At the very end of our period we have the *Life of Alivardi Khan* (*Āhwāl-i-Mahābat Jang*) by Yusuf Ali, and the equally valuable personal records of Sayyid Karam Ali and Sayyid Ghulām Husain Tabātabāi. Only two Muslim travellers have left any description of Bengal, however, slight; they are Ibn Batutā (c.13) and Abdul Latif (1608).

Nor has Muslim rule in Bengal bequeathed to us any letter-book, such as are plentiful for Mughal India outside this province. No history or memoir was written in Sanskrit or the provincial dialect during this age; hence one source of light familiar to us during the Hindu period is totally wanting in our second volume.

Therefore, the historical inquirer is thrown upon the histories of the Central Government of Delhi for authentic information and dates relating to Bengal, however, scanty they might be. For long periods, this source fails us altogether and our only resource is the coins of the local Sultans. These, for the earlier and more obscure centuries are of crude workmanship, and often mutilated by the

marginal deletion of the date where clearness is of the utmost importance, and a few inscriptions on mosques and tombs. For the rest, the student is enveloped in the twilight of local traditions and the legends of saints' shrines (which came to be written down very late, only in 18th century). These require critical examination and correction before they can find a place in a sober history.

After the middle of the 17th century, we begin to get light of another kind from the records of the English factories in Bengal and the diaries of their agents. Bengali literature, especially that produced by the Vaishnavas, touches only the social side.

Subject to the above caution, the following Bibliography is offered to the research-worker. It should be noted that I have not wasted time and space by recording every article or book that has been written on any topic of Bengal history during the Muslim period, but ignored the heaps of dead leaves and the vapourings of ignorant national pride*. Only such books and papers are listed here as rise above the common place or definitely establish some true fact.

The first attempt to write a modern History of Bengal was Captain Charles Stewart's "*History of Bengal* from the first Muhammadan invasion until the virtual conquest of that country by the English A.D. 1757" (London 1813). Later, Pandit Rajani Kānta Chakravarti, in his Bengali *History of Gaur* made a useful collection of all the traditions that were still current in and around Maldah and Gaur, but this work cannot claim the rank of a history, though it supplies useful raw materials. (It has been pirated, without acknowledgement by Abid Ali Khan.)

The *Banglar Itihas*, vol II., written by Rakhal Das Banerji in Bengali (Calcutta 1917), is a land-mark in the growth of our historical knowledge since the days of Stewart. Its value, however, consists in its being rather a complete index-volume of Bengal inscriptions and coins, learned dissertations, genealogical lists and extracts from sources known up to the year 1915, than a history of the type aimed at in our book. Moreover it ends with the Mughal conquest (1575), and thus runs parallel up to page 186 only of the present volume. But for the period that it covers it will give exact references to sources on any points on which a reader of our volume may wish to make further inquiries or verification.

I cannot conclude my remarks without recording a wish that

* Such as the assertions made *in 1947* that Pratapaditya had conquered Assam and brought *all* the Rajahs and Sultans of Bengal under his vassalage, or that Mohan Lal who was wounded at Plassey was a Kayastha of Bengal and that the Lal Paltan of Clive was composed of Bengalis by race.

well-trained students of Bengal Muslim numismatics should carefully study the dates and names on the coins of the early Sultans of Bengal, of which only defective specimens are to be now found in India, but much more complete and legible examples may be preserved in the coin-cabinets of the British Museum and the India office in London. Thus only can we hope to get decisive information where Dr. Nalini Kānta Bhattasāli has been baffled in his reading of the coins preserved in India or has drawn wrong inferences. The new light may entail a revision of our earlier chapters.

With the Mughal conquest (1575) we enter on firmer ground and have also plenty of the flesh and skin—as distinct from the bare skeleton—of Bengal history and accurate knowledge of our social conditions. The curious inquirer may consult my other writings for minute references which it has not been possible to give in this volume.

Of the independent Nawabs of Bengal from Murshid Quli Khan onwards, we possess full accounts of all except the first in the *Siyar-ul-mutākharin* (1788). All of them are treated more briefly in the *Riyāz-us-Salātin* (1788). Alivardi Khan has a long and valuable contemporary biography written by Yusuf Ali and entitled *Āhwāl-i-Mahābat Jang,* and another in Karam Ali's *Muzaffar-nāmah* (written in honour of Muhammad Razā Khan of the early English period). Ghulam Husain Tabātabāi, the greatest historian of later Bengal, came from Delhi to Murshidabad, aged five, in 1732 and therefore he totally missed out Murshid Quli Khan, of whom he had no personal knowledge. Therefore, our current knowledge of Murshid Quli Khan is based on Captain Charles Stewart's *History of Bengal* (London, 1813), which is a mere translation of the *Riyāz-us-Salātin*, supplemented by extracts from the English factory records. The *Riyāz-us-Salātin* for this period is not an original source, but has mainly copied Salimullah's *Tārikh-i-Bangāla* (written in 1763-64 at the instance of Henry Vansittart, Governor of Bengal), and the copying has been done so carelessly as to import many gross mistakes.

Therefore, we must everywhere follow the correct text of Salimullah in preference to the *Riyāz* or Stewart. For the earlier years of Murshid Quli Khan's service in Bengal, Salimullah gives very scanty information and that is too often incorrect. Happily it is possible to reconstruct the story of Murshid Quli Khan's work in Bengal from 1700 to 1716 (when he became a full-fledged subahdār) from (*a*) the letter book of Aurangzib compiled by his last Secretary Munshi 'Ināyetullah (entitled *Āhkām-i-'Alamgiri*), (*b*) the news-letters of the imperial court called *Ākhbārāt-i-Darbār—i-Mualā* and (*c*) on a number of points, the records of the English factories in

Bengal. These sources enable us to correct in many places the current traditions about Murshid Quli and supply exact dates and details.

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(2) *D'ario* de 3 Conde de Linhares vice-rei da India, tomo II (Lisboa, 1943), p. 161, contains information about the Portuguese of Hugli taken prisoners by Shah Jahan.

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